BING

JUNE
1985

Edited by REG BRISTO

NO 76

The International
Crosby Circle

Thank you most sincerely for your letter - I was very pleased to have been given the chance to entertain such a lovely and appreciative audience - even tho' I felt I may be in the lions' den in offering my services in front of such a 'learned' crowd of critics!

This was my first Bing 'do' - but it won't be the last.

ERIC VINCENT :(Fulham)

(See'Getting to know you'

I would like to add my congratulations to John Marshall for his hard work in making the function at the Rembrandt such a wonderful success -and meeting people like the Editor, Trevor Wagstaff, Renee Chester and all was a special delight.

JOHN MANSTON
(Poole, Dorset)

"This small university, Gonzaga, in Spokane, honoured its most illustrious alumnus in October 1937 by bestowing on him an honorary degree of Doctor of Music "...because the voice and personality of Harry Lillis (Bing) Crosby have brought pleasure and many a happy moment to millions of his fellow-men...."

BING - by Dr. Mize, circa 1946.

And continue to do so to this very day in 1985.....

Magazine of the International Crosby Circle, published quarterly.

No. 76 June, 1985

BING

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We don't normally proclaim BING is the best, the greatest, for the most discerning, etc. etc. We DO appreciate it when members say it is! But we do feel pleased with this issue. Crammed with good things - VOL 3 of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING is ready....GEC radio listings finished, we start the Cremo, and carry on with the Kraft....

Perhaps the most sensational item of Crosbyana has come to light..see Bing with Gus Arnheim in TRACK EVENTS.....

Your special attention is called to Page 20 - a selection of "runner-up" memorials will be included in the next issue.

SOCIAL EVENTS IN LONDON & GATESHEAD: WITH LEEDS TO COME ON SEPT. 22ND

All correspondents, named and un-named, are warmly thanked.

THE CROSBY CHRONICLES are published quarterly by JOHN MARSHALL, 39 Kings Rd Teddington, Midd'x. Annual subscription £2.50

Despite a Spring reluctant to part from winter, Crosby tulips made a splendid splash of colour this year all over.....

BING EDITORIAL

Having, so soon, indicated that the world of Crosbyana remains as thriving, as fascinating, as exciting, as ever, we glady forego the profundity of Editorial comment so as to make way for even more interesting items. To wit:

THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD is to be reprinted, revised, and issued as a hard-back companion volume of BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD. ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD remains a provisional name, but it is the FILM BOOK produced by the authority that researched and produced the full, authentic, discography of Bing - THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY, with Fred Reynolds as "managing editor" This is a tremendous project, and a ONCE IN A LIFETIME OPPORTUNITY, for, many years inthe preparation, running to 300-odd pages, it will never be re-printed after its first publication. 500 copies will be printed short of some substantial ordering, and will be on a subscription basis: £7.50 deposit will be required to secure a volume, balance when the book is completed in the autumn of 1985. Cheques to JOHN JOYCE, 21 Birchfield Gdns, Low Fell, Gateshesd, NE9 7TJ. Final price will be between £10 - £15.00. Every film Bing made, were suggested, TV films, guest spots, shorts, EVERYTHING - the songs in them and when recorded by Bing and a whole mass of background and biographical information - is included to make this a totally unique publication. Those who possess a copy of the first issue are proud to know they own the true Crosby film book, but this hardback volume will be even greater. No financial gambles can be involved, such is the magnitude of this project, so it is essential that at least an approximate estimate of the number of copies required is ascertained. Needless to say, the price will be a considerable concession to Crosby admirers; any publisher but JOHN JOYCE would reasonably be asking around £20 per copy. We get enthusiastic about things that are a boon to our fraternity - so, we're certainly enthusiastic about this! Remember, to be sure of a copy - deposit to JOHN JOYCE.

Complementary to the Rembrandt (London) and Five Bridges (Gateshead) events, THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY had its most successful tribute event to date on May 5th last at the Sheraton Hotel, Tacoma. So successful,in fact, that NEXT YEAR'S (May4) is already being planned....a committee involving LES PAUL, PHIL HARRIS and PERRY COMO, is to press for a US commemorative postage stamp....and the society's members are gearing up for their Bing's Britain tour of Europe this Autumn....

"....my ward was alerted that my daughter's request was coming thro' and everyone was listening on headphones. I was then amazed to hear practically the whole ward singing along with Bing and WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT. It was very touching and an unforgettable experience..."

GORDON WESLEY of Upminster, now happily out of hospital, and making slow but steady progress to full recovery. He has out best wishes as do ALL members in adversity of one kind or another.

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GETTING TO KNOW YOU at THE REMBRANDT

As proclaimed in the March issue of BING, April 27th was the day; it duly arrived, as did around a hundred sociable enthusiasts at the Rembrandt Hotel, in London's West area, amid some of the capital's most venerable and august edifices. How the hotel was inspired to get its artistic name we don't know, but the Elizabethan Suite certain presented a picture with soft lights, sweet music and a host of smiling Crosby people. The occasion, if it had to have a label, was to commemorate the 82nd anniversary of Bing's birth.

And the guests came from all over; it was not a localised London affair as could have been expected. They came from Wallsend, Felixtowe, Chelmsford, Bristol, Cardiff, the Isle of Wight (guess who?) - Cwmbran in South Wales...even.

Then there was Nottingham, from whence came the redoubtable Barry Whittingham, still in his wheelchair, still determined to walk again and becoming a real 100-per-cent attender at social functions with his attendant mother.

Benfleet, Chalfont St. Giles, Winchester, Taibach - where's that? - near Swansea mun, look you; - Poole, Lancing, Farnborough, Slough, Pinner, Potters Bar, Enfield, Chigwell....these with those actually from London and its suburbs surely made up a fair representation of our membership. And we're sorry for the locations we've inadvertently omitted, for there's bound to be some.

And gallant as we endeavour to be we cannot forbear mentioning that "elderly lady", much nearer 80 than seventy, ENA HOOLEY, who travelled up alone from Winchester to attend. Everyone is always pleased to see this remarkable lady.

We had every right to expect a nice, balmy, spring day but in fact the day almost qualified to meet Bob Hope's alleged assessment of some years ago. Back in America after a British visit he was regaling some friends with the delights of Britain. And for the weather? Rain, snow, hailstones, bright sunshine, gales, icy cold, pleasantly warm... What's special about that Bob? asked a listeners. We get all that here. "What, in one DAY!" was Bob's reported reply.

It wasn't quite like that, for we got to the Rembrandt around 3pm in brilliant sunshine. It wasn't all that warm however - but pleasant. Returning 'home' (just outside London) around midnight, thick ice (not frost) encrusted the cars and roofs! There was snow, in fact, in many areas of Southern England.

We are digressing in alarming fashion, however. The Rembrandt turned out to be all John Marshall said it was. The substantial buffet meal turned out to be to the liking of the majority, especially as it involved no tedious waiting. And substantial it certainly was for anyone feeling hungry after partaking of what was on offer must have been a trencherman (or woman) of substantial proportions!

The very well-appointed suite was tastefully decorated with pictures of Bing and the accompaniment to the hum of conversation was, inevitably, the familiar tones of Mr. Crosby. Records, pictures and books were on sale in an unobtrusive sort of way. The bar, open early, did not this time defeat its object in the way of prices; indeed, for the venue they were inexpensive indeed and compared favourably with current pub prices.

MELLOW MUSIC:

As promised, Bing gave way to 'live' music in the shape of a very mellow trio. We have to report, alas, that Crosby people, at least on this occasion, are not unduly partial to the delightful terpsichorean arts. In short, they didn't exactly flock to the dance floor. Some did indeed but the floor hardly got crowded! Perhaps the conversation and other diversions intervened. Not that the musicians were dismayed for the assembled company made it plain their musical efforts were appreciated.

CABARET TIME:

As foreshadowed, it had been anticipated that the renowned TEDDY JOHNSON, currently presenting and introducing his BING CROSBY STORY stage show (see notice elsewhere in this issue) could at the last moment not appear owing to indisposition. It became known that he had been singing on the radio that evening; this might well have been but too much shouldn't be read into this as there are very few radio programmes today which are not pre-recorded, often months in advance.

So, this non-appearance threatened some kind of hiatus in the proceedings. A brave invitation was made to anyone who felt like entertaining the assembly - brave for the inviter and brave for those accepting! With no rehearsal its not difficult to fine oneself embarking on a song in a key which would tax Joan Sutherland one moment - and Paul Robeson the next, necessitating a re-run or two. For the inviter well, he may live to repent his rashness.

As it turned out, however, the bravery was rewarded. Well rewarded in fact. Four or five volunteer i their services at virtually a moment's notice and performed very creditably.

No-one, we imagine, would deny that the exercise threw up a "star of the evening" in the person of member ERIC VINCENT, who hails from Fulham.

A few moments conference with the musicians and Eric launched himself and his listeners into a well-accomplished performance of song. In an extremely, pleasant, easy-on-the ear voice Eric gave us BEAUTIFUL DREAMER, THE FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL and GETTING TO KNOW YOU, returning later to offer further songs.

> Such was Eric's style and vocalising that we felt sure he had extensive experience, possibly professional. "No," he smilingly assured us. "I sing perhaps once a year - when I'm on holiday usually!"

So, no hiatus occurred. Indeed, Eric was very enthusiastically received - as were the other volunteers.

VIRTUALLY SPEECHLESS:

These highly diverting social occasions do not call for speech-making, but certain things have to be said. John Marshall held the thing together as a mixture of organiser/MC. Frank Murphy had some words to say about the work of John as indeed did yours truly regarding his inspiration and commitment. Such events do not just take place. Someone has to organise them. Furthermore, the work doesn't start the day before, but literally weeks if not months, before.

John Marshall suffered a particular trauma this year, too. For some still unexplained reason, his mail wasn't being delivered! Day after day he watched the postman pass unconcernedly past his door when he KNEW positively that there should have been

letters for him - people sending cheques &c. saying they would be at the Rembrandt, or would not be, as the case may be. Anxious to finalise arrangements at the hotel one can imagine John's anxiety and frustration. It got to the stage when two GPO investigators came to see him. Then, suddenly, a whole 3-weeks' mail poured thro' his letter-box. Relief for John but still no explanation - or apology.

We have already indicated that LESLIE GAYLOR made the arduous journey from the Isle of Wight which was a delight for all those who wanted to meet our Crosby stalwart. Leslie offered a few genial words - including the fact that he would be catching the 3am newspaper-train back to Portsmouth on his way home!

So another enjoyable social event has come and gone; all credit and thanks are due to John Marshall for his fine efforts - especially as everything he prognosticated in our previous issue proved fully justifiable. So nice to celebrate the birthdate of dear old Bing who continues to give us all so much pleasure.

> And it is most satisfying too that new friendships were made and older ones cemented purely as the result of a mutual interest in the Old Maestro. He would be pleased.

AND AT INCIDENTS SUCH AS THIS:

*** WHAT BING DID FOR ME AT EASTER ***

by DENNIS BARKER

—— It was an invitation by Harry and Pam Nolan to visit them at Bexhill-on-Sea that started it all.

I am a Hastings man, bred and born, and when I toyed with the idea of going there, I thought of relations I hadn't seen for some twenty years and more. So with the inspiration of having a Bing week-end, and seeing long-lost relatives, I went with my son for a 'meet-strangers' weekend.

Harry and Pam soon allayed any fears I might have had as they made me very welcome indeed at their home - called 'Spokane' - and Bing reigned supreme through Friday to Sunday lunchtime. Records, tapes, videos and wonderful hospitality was certainly the order of the weekend, with things I hadn't heard before were played and taped for me. A truly wonderful weekend.

I then set off to find my relations. And what a reception I had from them! Such was the welcome that I stayed in Hastings much longer than originally intended.

You see, therefore, how Bing continues to bring great happiness in more ways than one.

THRO' THE YEARS

If anyone had kept a comprehensive scrap-book on Bing it would be a pretty hefty tome! Several tomes, in fact. But no-one could have - it would have needed a worldwide press-cutting agency to even remotely cover what was written about Bing...books, magazines, newspapers...he was so much part of the scene, so accepted, such a household name that one seemed to be reading about him all the time - for virtually 50 years! Always it was with respect, admiration and downright affection - universally loved. We didn't keep a scrap-book but have, willy-nilly, accumulated so much over the years - as our pages oft times show with the actual reproductions we frequently print. And they always make good reading.

Take this from EVERYBODY'S of May 8, 1948 (remember, EVERYBODY'S was a popular weekly magazine like TIT-BITS. You don't remember TIT-BITS? We give up! However: here goes: "Bob Hope on Bing:

> "Don't worry about Bing . He is the man who made Sinatra's mother swoon. And in 1960 he'll be the man who will make Sinatra's daughter swoon." - The writer added: He may indeed. Crosby has already been singing for nearly 20 years, carefully never making full use of his extraordinary wide range of notes. If he did, millions who listen to his records would not be able to hum in what they fondly hope is an imitation of his manner....
>
> "I aim to please," says Bing about this, as once again he goes to the gramophone studio. Pipe in mouth, he ambles in, presenting this curious sight according to a reporter of the American periodical, NEWSWEEK:
>
> At about 3.15 the Crosby arrived. Stripped of his bright yellow scarf, tweed coat and inner-lined battle-jacket, he was left naked in a brown felt hat, bright red checked shirt, brown slacks, and the sort of shoes ordinarily seen in the Alps at this time of year.
>
> There are two or three trial recordings of different songs. Then: "Will this be the deathless disk? Shall we men?" (To the orchestra). It is done. Exit Crosby quickly - or what is quick for him.

Then again, it was reported also in 1948 : Future historians studying the political struggle in Britain of the 1940's will perhaps be more interested in a cartoon from one of our leading newspapers. There is an electioneering van, loudspeaker on top, and a middle-aged couple are watching expectantly. Under the drawing is the caption:

"WAIT - P'RAPS THEY'LL PUT ON A BING..."

From MOTION PICTURE, May 1938 - "We asked Bing how he practices that million-dollar voice of his? "I never practice," he said. "I have never taken voice lessons. As a matter of fact, I can't read music." His singing those deep, haunting tones and boo-boo-boos that pluck at the heart-strings is an unstudied art. We observed him from 2pm to 8pm and both during the rehearsal and the actual broadcast he was the same unpretentious, nonchalant fellow, except that during the broadcast he took off his cap in deference to the audience, but his blue shirt was still hanging outside his trousers and his pipe enjoyed temporary leisure in the pocket of his shirt....he is tanned, solidly built. When he finished reading his script he joined us...the secret of his unparalleled success lies in the natural spontaneous manner of his delivery....."

KRAFT MUSIC HALL

We have been pleasantly surprised at the vast interest shewn in our listing - by RON DANIELS of 1 Oxford St., Victor Harbor, South Australia 5211 - of the catalogue of songs Bing performed in his history-making KMH radio series. Again Ron insists he cannot guarantee accuracy - but we're fairly certain he is accurate. But to illustrate the interest, in the March issue Ron showed no details for certain dates as they were not available to him. But up comes ERIC GRIFFITHS from here at home (Benfleet, Essex) with those very details! They start off this issues instalment for those who are keeping them as a whole:

11th May 1939

Hang your heart on a hickory limb
And the angels sing.
Bye, bye, blackbird.
Our love
Jeannie with the light brown hair

25 May 1939

The lady's in love with you
And the angels sing.
That old gang of mine.
I cried for you
That sly old gentleman.

1 June 1939

Whistling in the wildwood
If I didn't care
Nobody
East Side of Heaven
Don't worry 'bout me

15 June 1939

Whistling in the wildwood
And the angels sing
Show me the way to go home
Stairway to the stars
That sly old gentleman.

ADD TO THE SONGS SHEWN FOR 20 JULY 1939 last issue:

Comes love
A man and his dream
In my merry Oldsmobile.

Bing was on vacation until 28 Sept. 1939, NOT 5th Oct. as stated last time.

28 Sept. 1939

Go fly a kite
An apple for the teacher
A man and his dream
Still the bluebird sings
The lamp is low
If I were a millionaire.

ADD TO 5th OCTOBER 1939 (previous issue):

El rancho grande
What's new?
Over the rainbow

12 October 1939

Moonlight serenade
An apple for the teacher
South American way (with Rosemary Lane)
Oklahoma Hail
Still the bluebird sings
Sunbonnet Sue
The lamp is low

ADD TO 19 OCT. 1939 (last issue) What's new? A man and his dream.

ADD TO 26 OCTOBER 1939 (previous issue)

An apple for the teacher.
If I knew then
Tennessee football song.

We now resume from where we left off in March:

2nd November 1939

Blow the smoke away
South of the border

9th November 1939

Are you having any fun? (With Lou Holtz)
If I knew then

16th November 1939

Scatterbrain
I can't believe that you're in love with me

23rd November 1939

Lilacs in the rain
Just a dream of you (at twilight)
After all

30th November 1939

Make with the kisses
Stop - its wonderful!
To you, sweetheart, aloha.
I can't believe that you're in love with me

7th December 1939

Ciribiribin (with Bob Burns)
After all.
I'm looking at the world thro' rose-coloured glasses

14th December 1939

Back home in Indiana

21st December 1939

No details

28th December 1939

El rancho grande.

4th January 1940

You're a lucky guy
Moonlight on the Ganges
Tumbling tumbleweeds.
Scatterbrain

11th January 1940

Vagabond dreams
My little girl
I'm looking at the world thro' rose-coloured glasses.
Holy smoke! can't you take a joke?

18th January 1940

Ballin' the jack

25th January 1940

No details available.

1st February 1940

Just a song at twilight
Just one more chance
I thought about you

8th February 1940

Confucius say
Silver threads among the gold
Indian summer
Love is the sweetest thing

15th February 1940

The little fox
Beautiful dreamer

22nd February 1940

Careless
Sunday, that one day
Sweet potato piper
Confucius say

29th February 1940

Beautiful dreamer
In a little Dutch garden
De Camptown races
Say 'Si-Si'

7th March 1940

I'm waiting for ships (that never come in)

(cont...

14th March 1940

Love is all
When Irish eyes are smiling
Tumbling Tumbleweeds

21st March 1940

Between 18th & 19th on Chestnut St.

28th March 1940

Yours is my heart alone (melody of 'You are my heart's delight)
Old Black Joe
Ooh! What you said!

4th April 1940

I've got my eyes on you

11th April 1940

Last night's gardenias
Tell me, little gypsy

18th April 1940

The woodpecker's song
Carry me back to old Virginny

25th April 1940

No details available

2nd May 1940

Sierra Sue
I haven't time to be a millionaire

9th May 1940

Ma, he's making eyes at me
April played the fiddle
The woodpecker's song

16th May 1940

Cecilia
Angel in disguise

23rd May 1940

My little girl
Down by the Ohio
Where do I go from you?
If I had my way

30th May 1940

No details available

6th June 1940

Hawaiian paradise
I can't love you anymore

13th June 1940

Playmates
She is the sunshine of Virginia
Make-believe island

20th June 1940

Virginia Lee
Juanita

27th June 1940

No details available

4th July 1940

Mister Meadow lark *
You tell me your dream
Just like taking candy from a baby
Make-believe island (comic intro)
*On behalf of the visiting firemen

*Both with Johnny Mercer

11th July 1940

Meet the sun half-way *
When I grow too old to dream
I'll never smile again.

* with John Scott Trotter.

We will press on with these KMH listings in future issues. The songs that Bing was singing in those far-off days before World War II..... one is reminded again, WHAT A CAREER! Those who have managed to pick up the KMH albums and tapes will be happy to see the songs falling into place, as it were.

One thing that strikes this writer is how little did Bing plug his films songs. There was no need to really for they became instant hits.

DETERMINATE CARROLL

BY LIONEL PAIRPOINT

too, with the vast majority of Crosby admirers thought Barry Norman's programme on Bing (in the recent HOLLYWOOD GREATS) was a very fair presentation of Bing's career. The 1978 interviews had, as pondered in the review here, been 'lifted' from a previous tribute programme which I have on tape somewhere - I have a feeling it could have been the one which was narrated by William Holden.

BUT I DISAGREE with the view that Carroll Carroll's contribution was 'indeterminate'. I think it was very DETERMINATE! For those possibly not with me, Carroll was the long-term writer for the Kraft Music Hall which, among other aspects, gave him a prominence he might not otherwise have attained. He was I repeat, very determinate. Indeed, the only compliment he paid Bing was on his ability as a singer; but as a person he labelled him as 'a selfish man' and 'one of those people who doesn't know how to be gracious'.

There is some personal rancour here, of course, in that in addition to being dropped on the advent of the Philco series, I think he is of the opinion that he has not received the recognition due to him for the public Crosby image that HE feels he created.

There was an article he wrote entitled THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL wherein he said:

> "I have been credited with giving Bing Crosby a style of talking. Paul 'Pops' Whiteman used to put his arm around my shoulder and tell interviewers 'Mousie here taught me to talk'. But I don't think I did such a good job with 'Pops' as I did with Bing.....the reason why the early Crosby/Kraft radio shows sounded stilted was that Bing simply resisted talking. He didn't want to be bothered with scripts and rehearsals. He just wanted to sing. Finally, we conceived the idea of putting lines in the guests' scripts that were not in Bing's script. No performer wants to wind up with egg on his face, and Bing rose to the bait. Always quick enough with a quip in the locker-room at Lakeside, he fell back on this natural resource. Between this, and the language I wrote for him which he enjoyed speaking, the public image known as Bing Crosby evolved." (end of quote)

I suppose my own feelings are summed up by Burt McMurtrie, Bing's long-time friend from his own hometown and producer of the Woodbury Shows, whose words provide the last paragraph of the much-maligned THE HOLLOW MAN:

> "I loved the man deeply, and I mean this truly, yet he was capable of doing stupid things. He was always the first to admit it. It doesn't do Bing or Dixie any credit to believe either of them wasn't very human, or that they were not pretty much like everybody else. If you want my personal opinion, I wouldn't want Bing any other way. Even his music seems to better for his being just an ordinary kind of person. Mind you, I don't think he was just plain old Harry L. Crosby who was born here in Tacoma and grew up east of the mountains in Spokane. Hell's bell's! Why, no one in this wide world ever did nor ever will sing so beautifully.

In that, he was superhuman."

Changing the subject, there was a letter in the March issue from NINIAN FAICHNEY regarding 'the old innocent words with a new meaning'. Expanding slightly on this, have you noticed that 'four' is a four-letter word on the Buddy Cole/Pete Moore version of Cole Porter's ANYTHING GOES? Was Bing advised, or did he feel obliged, himself, to alter the lyrics to

'God authors who once knew
better words,
Now only use short letter words,
writing prose...'

Bing doesn't sing the song in either of his two films with that title and the only other example I can find is from a Kraft medley of August 1945 when he seems to deliberately slur the phrase to

'Now only use f'letter words...'

I think it fair to deduce that Bing, always conscious of good taste, shied away from Porter's original lyric.

Another change of subject, but on the question of 'quotes'. Have you seen GERSHWIN: HIS LIFE AND HIS MUSIC by C. Schwartz? Here is an excerpt that might have the discographical treasure-hunters searching - if they believe it! The quote reads:-

'DELICIOUS may have gotten off to a good start at the box-office and gladdened his heart in so doing, but it was anything but a good movie. "Civilisation hasn't had such a setback since the Dark Ages" was the vitriolic report on the film in OUTLOOK & INDEPENDENT. Nor was this an isolated comment. For the film was claptrap, pure and simple, notwithstanding the ticket selling value of the names of Janet Gaynor, Charles Farrell, and George and Ira Gershwin appended to it....Gershwin had even recorded the tunes for the studio while in Hollywood..for the recording Gershwin at the piano ACCOMPANIED A THEN RELATIVELY LITTLE-KNOWN SINGER, BING CROSBY, WHO WAS PAID ALL OF FIFTY DOLLARS FOR HIS EFFORTS: UNFORTUNATELY, THIS HISTORIC RECORDING OF GERSHWIN AND CROSBY HAS BEEN LOST."

A little eccentric, perhaps, to describe Bing as a little-known singer - in 1931 tho' possibly allowable on the grounds that it wasn't until Sept. 2 of that year that he became a coast-to-coast celebrity, as we've remarked elsewhere.

Editor: Most entertaining column or two from Lionel Pairpoint - regarding NEVERTHELESS (THE FINAL CHAPTER - culled of course from Bing's last broadcast with Alan Dell) and listening to it with the care Lionel obviously did, I would not only agree but go as far as to say another take had been grafted in! Ashamed to say I hadn't noticed it until reading Lionel.

As for Carroll Carroll we concede his contribution was soured - his claim that he taught Bing to talk on the radio is highly pretentious. Remember by the time KMH came along Bing already had several films to his credit; he had delighted the film-stars at the Cocoanut Grove (full evidence of this now available!); he had MC'd a 20-week run at the enormous Paramount Theatre - all apart from the fact that Bing had received a good education; tho' he shied away from Pukka singing lessons he did take elocution training. Again, he became well-known early on for his chat and riposte ability. It was during that stint at the Paramount that he discovered, according to CALL ME LUCKY, that he was "quite the gabby fella". I shouldn't think Carroll said, or wrote, that while Bing was alive! As with so many other Crosby pundits. It IS conceivable that Bing preferred to be a radio singer rather than a comedian - we'll give Carroll that.

For those too young to know, Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell were two well-loved screen sweethearts in the early days of "talkies" !

BING - MAN OF LETTERS

One may just as well endeavour to discover precisely how many copies of WHITE CHRISTMAS have been sold, or how many times Bing sang BLUE OF THE NIGHT as to even guess at the number of letters he wrote during his career. Remember, it has been stated many times that there was a time when he received 10,000 letters a week! It has also been said that he answered every letter he received personally, allowing for the fact that there was undoubtedly a "set" letter; even so, if a letter raised a new point Bing invariably took it up and answered it. And Bill, the brother of Gordon Wesley of Upminster told us an astonishing story in this connection. During Bing's last Palladium stint, Bill and Gordon had been there two or three times and finally wrote a letter saying they particularly wanted to meet Bing. Rather than post it, it was taken to the stage-door where an adamant door-man told them to "put it with the others" and indicated, Bill assures us, about ten tea-chests stacked with letters for Bing!

However, they got lucky as they say, for Alan Fisher passed thro' and happened to overhear this conversation. He enquired as to precisely why they wanted to meet Bing. Being told, he took the letter - and subsequently both Gordon and Bill did meet Bing.

Many of our members have letters from Mr. Crosby which, naturally, they value highly. Leslie Gaylor, as you would expect, has a vast file of them, both from Bing and Larry. But many more have not such mementoes. Not only that, they may not even have seen a Bing letter. So, we thought it would be a good idea to let them see authentic reproductions of letters Bing wrote to his admirers. All are dated and the first is what Bing wrote to your Editor when I wrote and thanked him on behalf of all members for the tremendous work he had done in Britain, all time, but particularly at that particular time. The second letter is 30 years earlier, Christmas 1946 and as was usually the case, Bing puts the lady in the picture regarding his current activities.

The third letter, to miss Barnes whom, we regret we do not know, explains the particular difficulties of war-time - the war in Europe was just ending but America remained at war wi'h Japan as indeed, did all the Allies and the shortagrs were to exist for a long, long, time.

If there is one thing that is truly consistent it is Bing's signature. It seemed not to vary ever at all - which shows what a nonsense is that 'supposed' autograph on the 20 GOLDEN GREATS MCA album MCTV 3 - true it is not said to be such but surely it was to give that impression?

A final thought on this subject: It would be equally impossible to compute just how much Bing expended on his mail, especially when you consider thousands of the letters were accompanied by good quality photogrphs. No doubt Paramount and Decca weighed in in this respect.

Bing Crosby

January 17, 1977

Dear Reg:

Thanks for your letter, and I want you to know I appreciate all the kind things you had to say and the things that you told me that the other members of the Circle had to say about the things we did this summer - and the things we did really for the past eighteen months or so.

It hasn't been a lot of work. It's been fun! It was nice to give the kids a chance to work before a live audience. And the recordings were fun, too.

Glad you liked the Christmas show.

Have done some concerts since returning - about 3 weeks in New York and a concert in New Orleans. Have a couple more planned in the near future.

Also getting ready to do a big hour and a half TV Special with an all-star cast. A lot of famous names doing cameo appearances. It's a black-tie thing to be done over in Pasadena in a new and quite impressive theatre that's been erected over there. Should go well. I hope they play it in England.

Again, thanks, and warmest best wishes to you and all the Circle -

As ever,

Bing

Bing Crosby
BC:lm
Mr. Reg Bristo
7 Greenmeadow Close
C W M B R A N
Gwent NP4 3NR, United Kingdom

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

December 16, 1946

Dear Miss Taylor:

The photo you requested is being forwarded under separate cover.

My latest picture release is "Blue Skies", the Irving Berlin technicolor musical with Joan Caulfield. Hope you enjoy it.

Our new radio program is off to a good start, 10 PM Eastern and 9 PM Western Time on Wednesdays.

Thanks for your interest, and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Bing Crosby

BC:jl

Bing Crosby
Hollywood

April 17, 1946

Dear Miss Barnes:

Due to material shortages, I'm not going to be able to send out any more photos until we can obtain envelopes, card boards, etc., and I'm saving what we have to take care of the requests of the boys and girls in the different services.

Our next picture release is "Road to Utopia", in which I hit the trail again with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Bing Crosby

BC:jl

LESLIE GAYLOR WRITES

May I say what a delight it was to meet a substantial number of members, both old and new, at the Crosby get-together in London at the end of April - so well-organised by John Marshall, rapidly making a name with his sterling efforts.

No doubt the event is fully covered elsewhere in this issue so I will confine myself to thanking those who 'helped out' and contributed to the success of what was truly a most enjoyable occasion.

In the last issue member JANET SNOW wrote of Bing's recording of AUTUMN IN NEW YORK a song which I too enjoy very much. Janet - and others - may like to know that I was present at that particular recording session on September 12, 1977 with Bing.

After listening to the arrangement a couple of times, and going thro' little routines, Bing recorded two 'takes' of the song. He then came and sat down with just a handful of us to hear the playback. We hard the two 'takes' and agreement was reached with Ken Barnes - the producer of course - that all was well and the 'take' would do.

A few minutes later I found myself alone with Bing and remarked to him that it was a fine performance. A smiling "Thanks, Leslie" was Bing's reply.

> But I then said: "I like it best when your voice is presented well forward on record, not fighting against the accompaniment!" Bing, in characteristic style, drawled "Yeah...and so do I!" I was happy to hear this agreement, for Bing could have taken my comment as criticism.

The reason I mention this is that some few days later I had reason to telephone Ken Barnes and he immediately said: "Guess who's just been on the phone to me?" Not always quick-thinking (to say the least!) I could come up with no suggestions of whom had been phoning Ken, afterall, it could have been anyone in his profession. And indeed, it was!

> "Bing has just phoned me," said Ken, with some enthusiasm. Ken had sent Bing a cassette of the SEASONS tracks and it seems Bing rang Ken from the States requesting he try and re-mix the tapes IN ORDER TO BRING THE VOICE FORWARD A LITTLE MORE!

I like to think - indeed, its reasonable to infer - that Bing took some notice of my perhaps pointed comment!

Incidentally, there were 16 violins used on that arrangement and the studio sound was magnificent and really held me spellbound. Only being present in the studio with its superb 12-speaker system at the London CBS studios could convey just how magnificent that sound really was.

I can well understand Mrs. Snow's appreciation of a combination of a truly fine song, great orchestral sounds in which the strings are triumphant, and Bing's own splendid performance. I'm sure she isn't alone!

And Bing himself certainly liked the recording, asking Ken Barnes who had written the song - a fellow by the name of Vernon Duke, Ken told him and there was definitely a look of appreciation on Bing's face.

Another member, VINCE HARING, wrote of Bing's LP I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS in the March issue. For me, too, this is a great album and among the best of the Christmas material, and its beautifully recorded.

The album was made up of Bing singing to the pre-recorded orchestral tapes and there was some little concern at the time as to whether the record would be available in time to catch the Christmas trade in the USA. Bing always had such a busy schedule but finally got to the studios on October 5th, 1962. A very hasty effort to have the alhum produced, sleeves printed and distribution of the finished project had the records in dealers' hands in time for Christmas 1962. For those who do not have this recordlet's hope it gets reissued before long. It is certainly overdue.

Much was made this year of the 40th anniversary of VE Day and one of the results were some nostalgic radio programmes. I found myself listening to a repeat of the broadcast of ORANGES & LEMONS which featured a number of famous personalities of the time, including Bing. Such a programme certainly brings back the sounds, and the memories, of bygone years when we all spent much longer listening to the radio - with no TV!

Often in my past writings I have mentioned the name of one of the foremost Bing admirers it has been my pleasure to correspond with - Judge Francis X. Smith of the Supreme Court of New York. He is kindness itself; recently I received from him a large photograph of one of those famous 'Rhythm Boys' pictures. It came as a complete surprise and was in very colourful style. So expertly was this originally black and white photo coloured that at first I was completely taken aback. It took very close looking indeed to discover it had been coloured by a New York studio.

It was Francis, too, who sent the first press announcements of Kathryn's decision to 'call it a day' on the famous Bing Crosby Pro-Am Golf Tournament - which first started in 1937. According to Mrs. Crosby things weren't being handled as they had been over the years so a family agreement was reached to disassociate the Crosby name from the tournament.

> But it seems that three days after announcing her decision she was having second thoughts owing to having been besieged by requests from all over the world to make a final effort to save Bing's tournament.

Finally, I would like to say thanks once again to so many who have expressed their pleasure for the weekly Bing recordings now being regularly aired in Alan Dell's programme "Sounds Easy". These plays are now being heard by millions so this must help towards re-creating, or maintaining, interest in Bing's work. Alan Dell has now been broadcasting for 32 years and is indeed a knowledgeable man on the careers of so many show business personalities. I'm fortunate to be associated so often with this well-known radio personality. My thanks and best wishes to all.

SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL! SPECIAL!

A CHANCE OF FAME

It will readily be recalled that last October thro' the inspiration and energy of John Marshall, a tasteful IN MEMORIAM notice for Bing appeared in the worldwide show business publication, VARIETY, and this was reproduced in the Christmas issue of BING. This splendid project attracted universal approbation to the extent that it will be repeated this October in bigger and better style if possible. And here you can play a part. For here is the chance to win fame if not immortality! Last year the accent of the notice was on THE INDUSTRY; for 1985 it is considered that the memorial notice might best represent the true feelings of the world of Crosbyana IF IT COMES FROM YOU - A MEMBER OF THE ICC ! Perhaps you thought you may have done better with last year's, given the chance. Put it more succinctly perhaps?

HERE IS YOUR CHANCE: For £1 a go your thoughts and name could ring around the world next October. The rules are simple: work within a limit of TWELVE WORDS and compose your own little masterpiece of an IN MEMORIAM notice for Bing; as many goes as you like - one or half-a-dozen at £1 a go.

YOUR NOTICES WILL BE REQUIRED BY JULY 20 next. There is £202 in the kitty from last year's subscribers but at least double will be required for a full half-page. We are hoping indeed for a WHOLE PAGE! Let us tell the world that Bing will never be forgotten! JOHN MARSHALL will make the winning choice on the basis of it, in his opinion, being the best expression of IN MEMORIAM. And his decision will be final. Full accounting of monies received will always be available. WINNER WILL BE NOTIFIED WITHIN DAYS OF THE CLOSING DATE OF JULY 20 next. Splendid advance donations were made at the Rembrandt event last April and last year's notice was financed by various individuals and the different Crosby societies, magazines, &c.

THE WINNER'S NAME WILL APPEAR IN THE NOTICE TO BE PUBLISHED IN "VARIETY" with his notice on behalf of all of us.

The address: JOHN MARSHALL, 39 KINGS ROAD, TEDDINGTON, MIDDLESEX, TW11 0QD NOT TO YOUR EDITOR!

To give you an idea, some of the telling comments we received at the time of Bing's passing - and since - were:

(1) WHEN BING DIED, IT WAS LIKE LOSING MY DAD ALL OVER AGAIN.

(2) I INHERITED BING FROM MY FATHER - WHAT A GIFT!

(3) BING WAS LOVED BY THE WHOLE FAMILY, WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

(4) BING DEAD? IMPOSSIBLE - HE'LL BE WITH US ALWAYS WITH THE LEGACY HE LEFT.

You may like to consider something on the lines of the above.

ON the next page Begin one of the finest and truest tributes to Bing you'll ever read.

And our grateful acknowledgements to THE NEW YORKER.

THE NEW YORKER

MAY 8, 1978

THE SPORTING SCENE

THE PASSING YEARS

LAST October 14th, moments after finishing a well-played round at La Moraleja Golf Club, outside Madrid, Bing Crosby died of a heart attack. He was seventy-three. His death, which deeply affected his family and friends, not to mention the millions around the world who knew him through the motion pictures and recordings he had made over half a century, also greatly saddened the golfing community—for, of all contemporary public figures, he was the one most intimately identified with the game. I did not know Crosby well, but in January I was moved to make a sort of pilgrimage to the Monterey Peninsula, in California, to attend the annual Bing Crosby National Pro-Am, the tournament he founded back in 1937, which set the pattern for many tournaments that have been sponsored in recent years by other stars of the entertainment world. This year, everything at the Crosby, as it is generally called, was much as it has always been. There was, as usual, some terrible weather: On the night before the opening round, an inch and a half of rain fell on the already sopping courses, and, with several of the greens and fairways under water, the start of play had to be postponed a day. Most of the familiar faces—the celebrities, businessmen, and other amateurs who regularly team up with the professional golfers—were on hand, full of the spirit and enthusiasm that the event seems to generate. And, finally, the tournament itself was packed with excellent golf and high drama. At the end of the seventy-two holes, two of the most talented and appealing members of the new young professional band, Tom Watson and Ben Crenshaw, were tied for first at eight strokes under par. This called for a sudden-death playoff, and on the second extra hole Watson won out. It goes without saying that Bing was missed at every moment, and all the more because this was one of the best Crosbys ever. The tournament has apparently grown deep roots, and there seems to be no reason it should not go on and on.

There is no question that the prominent entertainers who over the last ten or fifteen years have become sponsors of tournaments on the rich P.G.A. tour are, with few exceptions, genuinely devoted to golf, but it is also unarguable that being connected with a nationally televised sports event watched by millions is a sizable promotional asset.

Crosby's involvement came about quite differently. He was an outright pioneer. In 1937, when he inaugurated his tournament, at the Rancho Santa Fe course, near San Diego, the pro golf tour was comparatively small potatoes, but Bing Crosby was already firmly established as a national institution. What led him to set up his Pro-Am was his intense love of golf and the pleasure he derived from being in the company of crack professionals. For the first tournament, he invited sixty-eight pros (among them Henry Picard, Dutch Harrison, Sam Snead, Denny Shute, Olin Dutra, and Paul Runyan) and sixty-eight amateurs (among them such Hollywood figures as Richard Arlen, Guy Kibbee, Fred Astaire, Zeppo Marx, William Frawley, and Gregory La Cava). Scheduled as a two-day, thirty-six-hole event with a purse of three thousand dollars—which Crosby put up—it was washed out the first day by heavy rain. On the second day, Snead, who was just coming into his own, shot a 68; this won him the professional competition and first-prize money in the Pro-Am, making for a combined haul of $762.30, which wasn't bad in those days, when first-prize money in the United States Open was only a thousand dollars. The important thing was that everyone loved the informal atmosphere of the affair, during which the entire field gathered in the evening at Bing's nearby home, where a battery of cooks grilled steaks, and where the host led off the entertainment with a few songs. The Crosby became a regular fixture on the tour until, after 1942, like many other tournaments, it was discontinued for the duration of the war. During those first six Pro-Ams, Crosby, simply by the obvious pleasure he took in the company of the touring pros, helped to give them a position of much greater social respectability than they had previously held. It brought to mind how, just after the First World War, when golf pros were still regarded as hired help and were not allowed in clubhouses here, Walter Hagen had led the way in changing that situation. Before and after playing an exhibition or a tournament round, he would walk blandly into the clubhouse through the front door to dramatize his point that if a professional was good enough to associate with club members on the golf course he was good enough to associate with them off it as well.

One reason Crosby was so fond of golf was that he had discovered it at the age of twelve, when he started to caddie at the old Riverside Golf Club in Spokane, where he grew up. From then on, he was fascinated by the game. He played it periodically during his years at Gonzaga University, in that city, and much more often when he became a band vocalist, ending up with Paul Whiteman's orchestra as the lead singer of the Rhythm Boys—a marvellous group, which was as far ahead of its time as the band's cornettist Bix Beiderbecke. After the Whiteman band completed the motion picture "The King of Jazz," in 1930, Crosby decided to go out on his own, and settled in Los Angeles. In no time, he had his own coast-to-coast radio program and was making two or three movies a year. During this period, he developed his fine golf game. He joined the Lakeside Golf Club, to which many people

in the film industry belonged, and, despite the rigors of his schedule, managed to play nine or eighteen holes several times a week. A well-coördinated man with a natural sense of timing, he got his handicap down to 2 and carried off the club championship five times. In 1940, he won a spot in the sectional qualifying round for the United States Amateur Championship, but failed to make the match-play rounds in the subsequent thirty-six-hole qualifying test held at Winged Foot, in Westchester, the scene of the championship. During the war, he played many exhibitions—as did his friend Bob Hope, himself a more than creditable golfer—to promote the sale of war bonds.

GOLF is a game that demands constant application, and during this stretch of his career hardly a day went by when Crosby didn't have a club in his hands. For example, he used to keep a shag bag of balls at the Paramount lot and, between scenes, practice chipping with a 7-iron on a small strip of lawn. I first saw him in action near the end of the war, when he was playing with some friends at Cypress Point, one of the courses on the Monterey Peninsula. Two things about that afternoon remain clear in my mind. First, I had long wondered whether Crosby was really as good a golfer as he was cracked up to be, and discovered that he was; he had a very legato, nicely grooved swing, and, while he wasn't particularly long, he hit crisp, straight shots down the fairway or toward the flag with the assurance of a man who knew exactly what he was doing. Second, I recall the astonishing way his voice travelled. You would be walking down an adjacent fairway, anywhere from a hundred to two hundred yards from his foursome, and, while you couldn't hear the three other players in his group talking at all or you caught what they said merely as an unintelligible mumble, Crosby's voice had such timbre that every word he spoke in an ordinary conversational tone carried like the peal of a bell, and he invariably sounded as if he were no more than forty feet away. I was told this past January by a friend of his that his hearing was equally exceptional, and that in a crowded room where the average man could not make any sense out of the babble Crosby could hear practically every word uttered and distinguish who was saying it.

At the end of the war, when golf and other sports started up again, Crosby made a brilliant move that transformed his tournament into a far more significant fixture. In 1947, he transferred it from Rancho Santa Fe to the Monterey Peninsula, the spectacular tract of forest and seashore about a hundred miles south of San Francisco. And he extended the tournament to fifty-four holes, with the first eighteen played at Cypress Point, the second at the Monterey Peninsula Country Club, and the third at Pebble Beach. While the Country Club's layout is nothing special, the layouts of Cypress Point and Pebble Beach are indeed. Cypress Point, which measures less than 6,500 yards from the championship tees, was designed in 1928 by Alister MacKenzie—the Scottish architect who later collaborated with Bobby Jones on the Augusta National—and is loaded with original and charming golf holes. It is usually ranked by knowledgeable players with Hugh Wilson's Merion, outside Philadelphia, and Donald Ross's Seminole, north of Palm Beach, as in a class apart from the country's other medium-length courses. As for Pebble Beach, which was completed in 1919, it may well be the best golf course in the world. It was laid out by Jack Neville, an outstanding California amateur golfer, who had never built a course before and did very little golf-course architecture afterward. Nonetheless, at Pebble Beach, where he was given a breathtaking piece of terrain, including high, rocky headlands that plunge straight down into Carmel Bay, Neville came through with an absolutely inspired piece of work, taking full advantage of the natural assets. At present 6,815 yards long from the back tees, Pebble Beach has been lengthened very little and altered only in minor ways over the past sixty years. There are eight seaside holes, all of them magnificent challenges, and the inland holes possess subtle qualities that give the course the proper balance.

The move to the Monterey Peninsula, with its superior courses, gave a whole new dimension to the Crosby. It immediately gained a further distinction, and with time it grew more and more important. In 1958, the year it became one of the first four tournaments to be nationally televised, its format was changed again: It became a seventy-two-hole tournament, and on Sunday the pros who had made the cut and the fifty low pro-am teams all played the fourth round at Pebble Beach. (By this time, the starting field had been enlarged to a hundred and twenty professionals and a hundred and twenty amateurs, and the purse, which had been raised to ten thousand dollars in 1947, was up to fifty thousand. It is now two hundred and twenty-five thousand.) In 1967, there was another notable change: Spyglass Hill, a rugged layout designed by Robert Trent Jones and completed the previous year, replaced the Monterey Peninsula Country Club as the third course used in the tournament. Down through the years, the galleries, lured partly by the famous professionals but perhaps primarily by the chance to watch celebrities like Jack Lemmon and Robert Goulet execute their patented finesse shots, continued to increase. So did the size of the television audience. This was due in good measure to the fact that beginning in 1958, after he had stopped playing in the tournament, Crosby served as the principal commentator. In 1971, thanks unquestionably to its being broadcast directly after the Super Bowl and on the same network, the final round of the Crosby reached what is still a record audience for a golf telecast: It was watched in more than eleven and a half million homes.

Several times, as the tournament's popularity kept increasing, pressure was put on Crosby to change it from a pro-am to a straight seventy-two-hole stroke-play event for the touring pros. A tough man to budge once he had made up his mind, he would not hear of it. "Bing felt that amateurs are the backbone of the game," Bob Roos, of the San Francisco merchandising family, said not long ago. "He liked to have friends from all phases of business and all kinds of professions, and he wanted his tournament to be an amalgam of top businessmen—particularly those who had contributed something to the game—along with championship-calibre golfers and a diversity of lively, interesting, socially compatible people." In recent years, several thousand players have applied annually for the hundred and sixty-eight invitations now extended to amateurs. From the start, Crosby personally selected those whom the invitations should go to—a task he found increasingly painful, since it meant turning down more and more friends. All in all, though, he loved the tournament. He was proud of the way

it had taken hold, and liked to recall how in 1947 it had required a staff of only five, while thirty years later the general chairman, Dan Searle, needed six hundred volunteers to get the show done right. Crosby also took satisfaction in another aspect of its growth: The tournament, which made only nine thousand dollars in 1947, from the sale of tickets and programs, has now raised a total of approximately four million dollars for charity. Most of this has gone to youth centers and to needy students, through scholarship funds that have been made available to over ninety colleges and universities, in forty states. In this year's tournament program, alongside a picture of Crosby in a double-page spread—he is seen carrying four irons and a wood over his shoulder—the following statement by Bing appears: "If I were asked what single thing has given me the most gratification in my long and sometimes pedestrian career, I think I would have to say it is this tournament."

BECAUSE of their marathon hoked-up feud and the many movies they made together, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope were linked in the public mind as the closest of friends. They were decidedly good friends, but, like most stars of their magnitude, each really went his own way. They were men of extremely different natures. Hope is essentially what he appears to be—a happy, pleasant extrovert who can be funny without a script, loves to be funny, and, as a friend of his once put it, looks forward eagerly to breaking up the next washroom attendant with a few well-tested one-liners. Crosby was far more complicated. He was fundamentally a rather private person, and liked to spend quite a bit of time by himself, reading (something he did extensively), looking into his various interests, or simply thinking. This led some people to refer to him as a loner—a tag he resented, and with good reason, for, while there was a streak of shyness in him, he was at times the soul of gregariousness. As long as a person was bright or amusing or congenial, it mattered little to Crosby how wealthy or socially prominent he might be, and his friends included studio technicians, musicians, chauffeurs, horse trainers, and proprietors of bowling alleys. He had few truly intimate friends. One person he saw a good deal of was Basil Grillo, who over the last thirty years has served as the operating head of Bing Crosby Enterprises. Most people agree that probably the three men who knew him best were George Coleman, a wealthy oilman; Vic Bergeron, who started the Trader Vic restaurants; and Phil Harris, the orchestra leader, whom he met back in 1925. Besides being comfortable companions, these men were in a position to lead flexible existences—to get packed and go fishing, golfing, or whatever at short notice. This was something that Crosby appreciated. When there was work to be done, he was the complete professional—always prepared, always punctual—but during his free time he liked to do what he wanted to do when he wanted to do it. If a friend phoned Crosby at seven in the morning and suggested something that appealed to him, he was one of those men who would be ready to be picked up in fifteen minutes.

Unlike most people of his degree of celebrity, Crosby travelled without an entourage. When the spirit moved him, he liked to mingle with everyday people; he enjoyed them, and the rapport he could establish with them was heartening to him. Once, when he was in New York and wanted to go to the races at Aqueduct, instead of hiring a limousine or a taxi he took the subway. Another time, in the early nineteen-fifties, when he was in Paris and was wandering by himself along the Champs-Élysées on a balmy night, he sat down on a bench near the Rond-Point to enjoy the world, fell asleep, and was roused the next morning by a puzzled *agent de police*. There was nothing singular about his working out with the Pittsburgh Pirates, a baseball team in which he had a financial interest—many owners derive pleasure from that—but it surprised me to learn that in the days when he had a ranch, in Elko, Nevada, he would get on a horse at seven in the morning and ride all day. The intense workout recharged him. If Crosby could be remote on occasion, he could also be extraordinarily thoughtful. One year when he went on safari in Africa with Virgil Sherrill, a New York businessman who had been a Crosby tournament regular for many years, and six other people, he busied himself in the evenings working out lyrics about the various members of the party and putting each set of lines to some familiar tune. On his return to the States, he hired a studio and a small band, and then sent each of his companions a copy of the recording he put together.

Most of Crosby's friends agree that when he moved from the Los Angeles area to the residential community of Hillsborough, south of San Francisco, in 1963, a few years after his second marriage, to Kathryn Grant, the new locale suited him admirably. The move took him out of the old hubbub, except when he wanted a taste of it, and he was able to lead a quiet, orderly family life, as was his wish. A man who basically thrived on routine, he rose quite early in the morning, breakfasted, read the paper, answered his mail, and then called in his butler, Fisher—whom he had found in England—to discuss the schedule for the day. He played his golf at the nearby Burlingame Country Club, where he was treated, as he wanted to be, as just another member. A lot of his rounds were with his sons by his second marriage, Harry and Nathaniel, two pleasantly intelligent young men. Three years ago, when Harry was sixteen, Nathaniel thirteen, and Bing seventy, each played to a 9 handicap. Harry has since spent less time on golf and more on music. A good classical guitarist, he is now studying at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Nathaniel, who is tall and slim, decided at the age of eleven that he would like to become a golf professional, and now, at sixteen, that is still his goal. He has an unmistakable talent for the game, and plays to a 1 handicap. This year, he took his father's place as the sponsor of the Crosby, and though the pressure on him was unrelenting, performed equably and well. It is pleasant to know that the family wishes to continue the tournament.

As was generally appreciated, Crosby had an extremely good mind. He was fascinated by language and enjoyed concocting phrases that were out of the ordinary and had a little flick to them. He had a startlingly good memory. One friend has estimated that he knew twenty thousand or so people by name. Throughout his life, of course, he devoted a large portion of his time to sports—more, perhaps, than any other celebrity of our era. They were a source of both stimulation and relaxation. He did not sing very often just for the pleasure of singing, but when he was out on a golf course with old friends he would break into song, hardly aware that he was doing so, and, even more frequently, he would whistle his way down the fairways. He appeared to be just as honestly nonchalant as this

when he played in the 1950 British Amateur Championship, on the Old Course at St. Andrews. The news that he would be appearing in the championship sent a wave of excitement through Scotland, a land in which he was a great favorite, and the morning that he teed off on his opening round, against J. K. Wilson, a carpenter from St. Andrews, dozens of buses and numberless private cars converged on that speck of eastern Fife, and approximately twenty thousand fans were soon packed along the borders of the course. Crosby did not let them down: He birdied two of the first three holes. I saw only the first birdie, and it was a beauty. The opening hole at St. Andrews is a drive-and-pitch par 4 only 374 yards long, but it is a ticklish proposition, because the green is set smack on the far side of the Swilken Burn, which twists across the fairway. After a good drive down the right side of the fairway, Crosby took what looked like a 7-iron and hit a very sweet pitch, which cleared the burn by a couple of yards and finished three feet from the pin. He eventually lost the match, 3 and 2, but I have an idea that he did not want to create such a crowd scene again—he hadn't expected anything like it—and intentionally let a few holes slip away as the round wore on.

I think I will always remember how well Crosby played the first hole of that championship—particularly that classic approach shot. It was a remarkable exhibition under the circumstances, but this was a rather remarkable man—a very nice man who gravitated to high standards and who kept on growing all his life.

DAILY EXPRESS Tuesday August 5 1975

Bing bounces back at 71, chasing a chart-topper

BING CROSBY, grandaddy of the pops, is back in Britain hoping for his first big hit in almost 20 years.

The Old Groaner, whose crooning thrilled the teenage swooners of the 'thirties, believes he has a winner with a song called "That's What Life is All About."

Most of today's weeny-boppers have never heard of him. But now 71-year-old Bing aims to put the record straight with his new image.

For a start he no longer bothers to wear his toupee when off stage. In London yesterday, he explained: "I wear it on television so that I can be identified.

"My other identification—the pipe smoking — has gone. I gave up smoking after my lung operation last year. I wasn't told to do so by doctors.

"Since I gave up smoking, my vocal range has improved. I have now become involved in making a lot of records again."

Bing has five L.P.s scheduled for release in Britain and the U.S. They include one with Fred Astaire, completed last week.

Bing, looking fit and cool in a pair of shorts, which should switch on the grannies, said: "A hit will be a great thing, having been out of action for so long so far as the record charts are concerned.

"I don't keep up with that scene the way I used to. I don't know half the names in the charts. Of course I do know the big names such as Elton John and what's-his-name Presley."

Today he will keep in the swing with a round of golf at Sunningdale, Berkshire. He hopes to partner his old rival Bob Hope.

The lengthy story from THE NEW YORKER, entitled 'The Sporting Scene' concluded on the opposite page is surely one of the finest assessments of Bing as a man, a golfer and as an artist, we have yet seen. We think you will agree. It illustrates what we've always known - that Bing instituted his famous golf-tournament for the pure love of the game and maintained an unrivalled standard of fairness and a social atmosphere. Many followed suit with their tournament, realising it was good publicity and boosting their image. Not so with Bing. Since Bing's death, however, it has been a wonderful annual event for keeping Bing's name and memory alive; so it is very regrettable that Mrs. Crosby has made the decision to drop his name from the event.

YET, if there are forces at work prostituting the true sporting aims that Bing strove for all through the years from 1937 to 1977, turning it from its true function to a commercial one, then there is much to be said for Kathryn's decision. The time might come when the tournament was tarnished - and Bing's great endeavours.

On the other hand again, surely some way can be found, some people with integrity (tho' as we know, a lot of people don't value that asset too highly these days as some writings/comments on Bing have indicated) who would, with Nathaniel and perhaps legal experts, contrive to maintain the valid principles Bing held dear? That this might be the case has been indicated. It would be sad if the CROSBY PRO-AM TOURNAMENT dies and thereby another firm memorial to Mr. Crosby.

And on the same memorial theme, our members continue to show a fair degree of fertility! Regarding the possibility of a commemorative postage stamp here in Britain, JOHN NORRIS WOOD, of Wadhurst, Sussex, tells us that the authority to approach (in your numbers if you so desire!) would be:

PO HEADQUARTERS,
(DESIGN SUGGESTIONS DEPT)
22/25 FINSBURY SQUARE,
LONDON EC2A 1PH

With John, we think it a terrific idea, especially if we could beat America to it - but to be honest, we do not think it a likely proposition. Nevertheless, they who dare.....

And (MRS) JANET SNOW of London Colney, Herts, has yet another idea.. Janet writes (among other things!) :

My husband Geoff. is an absolute, fanatical, steam railway enthusiast and we often have a bit of friendly rivalry over the two interests, Bing & trains, but he came up with a great idea to combine the two: asking BR to name a train after Crosby! I thought I would write and get your views as may be we could attempt it via the Circle. Apparently the chap to write to is:

BOB REED,
BRITISH RAIL,
MARYLEBONE STATION,
LONDON

Geoff suggests that if we made the request of naming one of the new diesels perhaps around the date of the British Open at St. Andreww, taking into consideration Bing's great links with golf

they may well consider it. Anyway, let me know what you think and who should go about it. We are willing, if you are busy! "

Well, I'm all for anything that goes towards perpetuating Bing's memory - and I'm certainly busy. Although I consider myself an all-round sportsman (watching only these days!) I must confess the appeal of golf completely eludes me but as such a statement could easily lead to a lynch-party making for Gwent I'll not pursue it! Railways - oh yes, I'm a fan there - the locos, the laying out of the line, the viaducts, tunnels, the embankments, the cuttings - one of the most remarkable of all stories. To have an engine, even a diesel, named after Bing would be nice. Actually, we do have railwaymen within the Circle, including drivers and signalmen. Perhaps they could help? Janet's address is:

102 Kings Rd.,
London Colney,
Herts.

and if she, and any of the railwaymen we have, care to take the initiative we will weigh in with any help we can.

Because he is so often being asked the titles on the following LESLIE GAYLOR has turned to us in desperation as he cannot go on continually writing them out; be it noted, however, details of these albums HAVE appeared in BING earlier:

GOLDEN 28 MELODIES: GERMAN MCA 301 378-370: Cassette: MCA 501 378-372

1.
- Symphony
- Sioux City Sue
- South America, take it away
- A gal in calico
- Ballerina
- Faraway places
- Riders in the sky
- Mule train

2.
- Deep in the heart of Texas
- Moonlight becomes you
- People will say we're in love
- Oh! what a beautiful morning
- Poinciana
- San Fernando Valley

3.
- Chattanoogie Shoe shine boy
- Quicksilver
- La Vie en rose
- Harbour lights
- Moonlight bay
- When you & I were young Maggie Blues
- Domino
- In a little Spanish town.

4.
- I love you (Cole Porter 1944)
- I'll be seeing you
- Amor
- Long ago and far away
- You belong to my heart
- On the Aitchison, Topeka & the Santa Fe

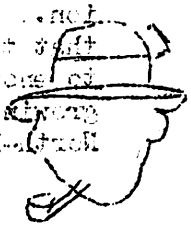
The songs on 2 and 4 sides also appear on MCA single album entitled ORIGINAL FAVORITES (our copy of the latter also states FRANCE!) The two-album set containing all four sides listed above has also been labelled STAR-GOLD! Confusing, is it not?

These albums are not GENERALLY available in this country; nevertheless, many members have reported getting them from various shops (OUR PRICE, for instance, and others) Seems it depends on whether the retailers have the means, or the avenues, for importing them. When you come to TRACK EVENTS later on in this issue you will recognise this is one of the sore points we put to MCA America.

Please retain the titles for future reference - to save Leslie getting writer's cramp, obliging chap that he is !

And please regard this as an addition to our feature: TRACK EVENTS !

THE GATESHEAD EVENT



London (John Marshall); Gateshead (John Joyce) with Leeds (Michael Crampton) to come this year social events are clearly taking a firm hold on the Crosby scene. Less than 2 weeks after the successful event at the Rembrandt Hotel, London, GATESHEAD chalked up another highly successful function. PHIL MORGAN reports as follows:

"TRIBUTE TO BING" gathering was held in the Washington Suite of the Five Bridges Hotel, Gateshead, on Friday May 10th last. The attendance at this now twice-yearly event was the best yet, a most encouraging circumstance.

All were warmly welcomed by John Joyce who, of course, again organised the function. Many old friends from far afield were present, including Michael Crampton from Leeds, Eileen and Arthur Allum from Felixtowe, Dennis Saville and Jean from London, Paula Sangster and Grace from Potters Bar in Herts, and George and Mary Harwood from Cambridge. Others travelling fair distances included Mr. & Mrs. Ron Jones, from Telford, Bert Day from Dalkeith in Scotland and Gwen Harvey from Farnborough. It is understood many of these had also been present at the Rembrandt a fortnight earlier!

MICHAEL CRAMPTON was presented with another son, Shaun, in March last, by his Wife Judy - brother to Iain. Congratulations!

Introductions having been made, music and conversation were to the fore until the evening meal, again well in keeping with the high standard of the Five Bridges, and comprised:

1. Florida Cocktail
2. Steak and kidney pie with roast potatoes and garden peas.
3. Mandarin Cheesecake
4. Coffee.

The meal enjoyed and out of the way, the evening continued with a couple of quizzes, films and, naturally, more Crosby music. As the quiz at the event last November produced several winners the questions were made more difficult. Nevertheless, the first quiz still produced a 100-per cent winner - BERT DAY - and the second was won jointly by two ladies - SHEILA ARMSTRONG and BARBARA COULSON.

Three films were shewn, all Mack Sennett 'shorts - SING, BING, SING, BLUE OF THE NIGHT and DREAM HOUSE. These were well received, as they always are, especially when viewed for the first time by many present. These 'shorts' give Bing in excellent voice (the main object) and are not too time consuming.

Once again we were very pleased to have amongst the guest the presenter of the MEMORIES programme on Metro Radio, PETER HETHERINGTON. Peter's programmes always contain a special Bing spot and the evening's event as well as the ICC have been given considerable publicity by him over the last few weeks. Indeed, Peter played quite a part in the success of the evening because quite a number of the newcomers present, attended as a result of hearing about it on Peter's programme.

Finally, thanks are due to John Joyce for his splendid organisation.. Everything on these occasions runs so smoothly and informally that they tend to conceal the tremendous amount of hard work he does to ensure the success of the evening. As indicated, attedances are growing all the time, and Bing is still very much "alive" here in the North-East.

In view of such a successful and enjoyable evening it is grievous to report a disastrous consequence for BERT DAY who travelled all the way down from Dalkeith in Scotland. The next morning Bert went to the hotel's underground car-park - to find that his car had been stolen. This was bad enough in all conscience, necessitating as it did a tedious return to Scotland via train, bus and taxi. This had to be borne, and the loss of the car will, in due course, be made good. But the appalling truth is the boot of Bert's car contained at least 50 Bing LPs and in excess of 50 78rpm Victor records - the rarest of them all and certainly irreplaceable.

It is certainly to be hoped that a change in fortunes will at least bring Bert the return of these precious items of Crosbyana; but the hope must be slim. As we write - almost 3 weeks after the theft - Bert has no news from the police.

As one who has twice had a car stolen, I know the feeling of - first - blank disbelief, and secondly, the appalling sense of personal loss. On each occasion, my car was found more or less intact within days - but a large box of BING'S for overseas posting in the boot had been wantonly torn open and spoiled - needlessly of course. But, then these could be replaced.

The prominence given to these larger events (London, Gateshead, Leeds) should not be taken that we overlook the splendid efforts of others like Phil Clarke (Portsmouth); Tom Evans, Don Small (West Midlands) and others around the country who have encouraged smaller but just as enthusiastic social events. And in this connection. CHAS. CULLEY (25 The Curlews, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 2NL) was dismayed - as were we - to get a totally nil response to his invitation that East Anglian members contact him with a view to regional events. Chas agrees that East Anglia may be an indeterminate area - if it included Essex it would be an entirely different response! - but members who feel close enough to Mr. Culley could still get in touch.

IF ANYONE HAD TOLD US THAT A COMPREHENSIVE FILM OF THE LIFE AND CAREER OF ROSEMARY CLOONEY, LASTING ONE AND THREE-QUARTER HOURS, COULD BE PRODUCED WITHOUT ONCE MENTIONING BING CROSBY, WE WOULD HAVE SAID "IMPOSSIBLE!" BUT SOMEONE DID! IT WAS SHOWN ON CHANNEL FOUR AT 9 O'C EVENING OF MAY 28

Trading POST

Members may advertise here without charge tho' there is a nominal charge of £1 for non-Bing items - not particularly welcome as Crosbyana is the main object. Books, tapes, records, memorabilia &c. for sale/exchange... Keep items brief, maximum of six lines. If lengthy lists are involved, invite a S.A.E.

BING ties in maroon or dark blue with the silhouette motif (toning with almost any outfit) now cost £3.50 + 20p P & P from BAXTERS BADGE CENTRE, 13 Ropergate, Pontefract, West Yorks, WF8 1LL.

BOB JONES, 80 Beech St., Jarrow, Tyne & Wear, NE32 5LD: Taped recordings of Bing, Jolson, Dick Todd & many others. For a copy of my catalogue send a 12 x 8 envelope with a 48p stamp. I WANT: Any discographical information on the rec ordings of GEORGE FORMBY.

ROBERT CAUNT, 101 Stoneyford Rd., Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts NG17 2DR (phone 0623-511688) wants BING'S HOLLYWOOD No. 2 - PENNIES FROM HEAVEN - Will pay cash.

BING-A VOICE FOR ALL SEASONS, the book by SHELDON O'CONNELL is avail able from KERRYMAN PUBLICATIONS, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland at £10

BERT DAY,35 Galla Crescent, Dalbeattie, Scotland, DG5 4JY:Hard to get 78s skillfully transferred to cassette C90 are in very good sound quality. Anyone interested they are £3 each for UK members in cluding P & P; £4 for overseas mem bers including airmail postage, Vols 1 - 4. Try Vol 1 - you'll be surprised at the sound. Cheque or PO, NOT CASH.

MRS. RENEE CHESTER, 48 Milton Rd., Hanwell, London, W7 finds herself in the unfortunate position - not usual among our people - of having Spokane albums 24-25-26 on her hands at people asking for them having not taken them up. They are now £8. plus £1.50 P & P. Undaunted, Renee says if anyone wants the new Spokanes 23-27 and BING IN GOLD record, they will be here around end-Aug. Cheques MUST be sent with orders,price as given. Mrs. Chester has most of Bing's films, TV shows and other items on video available. Enquiries with SAE to address given.

(On a personal note, MRS. CHESTER has decided to emigrate to Spain; she says however this will make no difference to her Crosby activites. She intends to return anyway for the Leeds event and perhaps others - but her departure will be early 1986.)

MRS. DORIS WAR, 106 Gills Cliff Rd., Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1AD: albums World Records: VERY BEST OF BING: THE SONGS I LOVE (SYMPHONETTE SINGLE ALBUM) THE 1-RECORD OF THE AUTO-SET MCA MONO MUP 461/5: BEST OF MARIO LANZA, Collectors' Edition - all unused. BLACK & WHITE MINSTRELS: THE SINATRA TOUCH and other miscellaneous records for sale: offers with SAE please.

LIMITED EDITION ONLY: PHILCO SHOWS: The first 24 programmes available on 12 60 mkn cassettes, £36, plus £2 postage. If response is good all 108 shows will be issued. Cheques payable to C:P.T.CLARKE, 21 Stockheath Lane, Havant, Hants, PO9 3BU. Quality assured.

Does anyone know of an ELLA FITZGERALD society? If so, please contact M. Harris, 92 Biddulph Mansions, Elgin Aven.,London W9 1HU

Due to personal/private reasons, my Crosby collection must go; all interested may apply for lists of contents and sale conditions to JIM LOWE, 40 Winifred St., North Woolwich, London, E16 2HX, enclosing a 9 x 3 SAE for lists.

STEVE THOMPSON, 13 Avignon, Milfor Grange, Castletroy, Co. Limerick, Ireland: Have spent 26 years in America; on returning here have thousands of very rare collector items, long playing albums &c. Soundtracks, original casts, rare male/female vocals by Bing, also jazz, folk, big bands, country & Western - also tapes of 50 years of American radio shows, e.g. Bing, Jolson, Nelson Eddy, Jeannette Mac Donald, Mario Lanza, Nat King Cole etc. etc. All enquires with SAE if possible to address above.

Not setting a good example, the Editor would like to acquire good TANGO albums, by good class orchestras, especially one that includes OLE GUAPA! Also Spanish-language vocal/guitar/harp groups like LOS PARAGUAYOS or similar. Bing albums available for exchange or CASH.

Car-stickers no longer(temporarily) available.

Those interested in photographs of Bing and his family(s) should contact FRANK MURPHY, The New Bing CrosbyPhoto Club, 32 Ferndale Av., Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, NE28 7NE stating requirements with SAE. Comprehensive packs available of excellent pictures.

CORRECTION! On the previous page, half-way down column on right, the lady's name is MRS. DORIS WARD, not WAR.

For newer members, and older ones who still write asking: "Did Bing ever record so-and-so?" we again draw attention to the hardback volume BING-JUST FOR THE RECORD. This lists ALL Bing's recordings from the first in October 1926 to the last in 1977 in date order, and then in alphabetical order. Apart from answering queries, the volume affords hours of fascinat- browsing; and it provides also, of course, a history of popular song over more than 50 years for Bing just sang and sang all through those years the popular songs of the day as well as the wonderful 'standards'.

BING-JUST FOR THE RECORD costs £3.50 post paid from:

JOHN JOYCE (BOOKBINDERS)
Saltmeadows Rd.,
Gateshead,
Tyne & Wear,

Cheques, POs payable to JOHN JOYCE I.C.C. A/C

Overseas members can obtain this invaluable publication at the following rates:

IN EUROPE:	£4.00	
US/CANADIAN:	£4.00	surface mail
	£6.00	air mail

All overseas remittances to be in sterling please.

A few copies of THE ALTERNATE BING CROSBY, an analysis of the varying 'takes' of Bing's recordings remain available at £2.50. Compiler of this fascinating work is COLIN PUGH of Bristol. (Post paid in price)

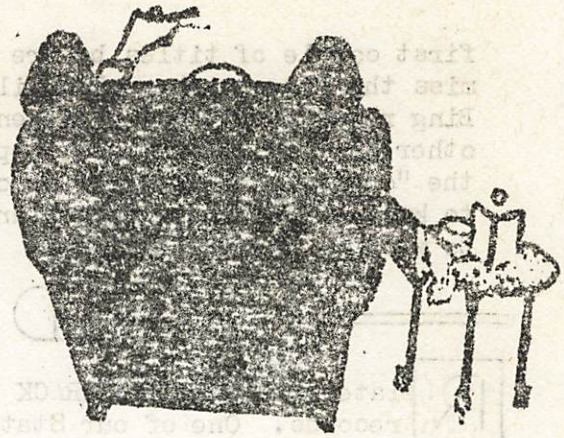
I see the new Soviet leader lists among his lighter pursuits, a fondness for the singing of Bing Crosby. I recollect reading years ago that if Hitler had played cricket there would have been no World War II. I imply nothing, God forbid, but surely Gorbachev cannot be such a bad chap if he likes our favourite!

(Claude Bishop, Strelley).

We had what we thought was a fairly humourous riposte to the above. But the appalling events in the world of football completely forbid anything remotely funny being added.

And while it is not our function to comment on day-to-day events the truly dreadful inferno at Bradford, (we have so many members in West Yorkshire) and then the equally dreadful happenings in Brussels have revised many ideas about sport. Football used to be such a wonderful game.....

BING *track* EVENTS



OR

We might add a sub-title:

AND RELATED MATTERS !

Firstly, however, in the interests of accuracy we must correct an item that appeared on page 34 of the previous issue re. Decca RAL 505 ("STARS OF THE THIRTIES ALBUM"), the third song should be THANKS and not MOONSTRUCK. Thanks too to those who pointed this out - as ERIC GRIFFITHS (Benfleet) said: Apparently it was decided to change this, but no one thought to advise the sleeve-writer!!

Unless something startling happens after we've started this round-up (such as it is!) it is mostly NON-track-events again. We have in mind further instalments of THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY and the No. 2 Volume of BING IN THE THIRTIES. We await these with members, but are bound to submit that the CHRONOLOGICAL prospect, bold it in its conception, gets even less likely to achieve fulfilment if the period between issues stretches to six months or more. Not that we want to castdown the brave instigator! We understand too well the enormous difficulties he is facing.

No doubt many members have spotted what must really be the most odd, indeed eccentric, Crosby reissue of all time! There is an album in the shops entitled:

YESTERDAY'S HITS FOR TODAY: CBS 54680

There are seventeen tracks, with one by Bing. And its the 1929 Paul Whiteman recording of ORANGE BLOSSOM TIME! Well, that's yesterday all right even tho' still fresh to us; but the odd thing is all the other tracks date from the 'Fifties with performers like Frankie Laine, Johnny Ray, the Four Lads - I think its Tony Bennett who sings, of all things, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN! The price I saw was £3.99p If they had included a 40's or 50's - even a 30's track of Bing it might have made more sense. Surely our description of odd is justified? Apart from other things, most Crosby admirers would get no further than the

first couple of titles before passing on to something else - and thereby miss the Bing track. Few will want to pay £3.99 on the strength of one Bing record; slightly different if you can bend a tolerant ear to the other sixteen tracks. We hope we're not overstating it when we call it the "oddest" reissue. If anyone can offer one even odder we'll be glad to know! And now - unless and until we get more tangible record news - to what we have called :

RELATED MATTERS

Related, that is, to TRACK EVENTS, our way of describing Crosby records. One of our Stateside members, RICHARD PEARSON, of Arlington, Virginia - we have no less than four members of that name which is why we have mentioned his domicile! - was with us at Leeds last autumn and he recently received a letter from the main MCA outfit. This is reproduced now, and the items in CAPITAL letters are our capitals: -

MCA
RECORDS

Dear Mr. Pearson,

Thank you very much for your letter and your compliments. I love Bing Crosby too. There has been a lot of resistance here to Bing Crosby reissues. I believe one of the problems is HIS ESTATE IS NOTCOOPERATING WITH US. The 'Bing's Hollywood' series will never be reissued in its original form because we have lost the rights to those exact packages.

REGARDING ALTERNATE TAKES, WE HAVE LITERALLY HUNDREDS OF THEM. I am always hoping for a Crosby reissue series, but so far my attempts have been thwarted for one reason or another.

I WOULD LIKE THE NAMES OF THE VARIOUS CROSBY SOCIETIES. I ALWAYS LIKE TO GET FEEDBACK FROM FANS.

One of the problems with American MCA is that the English and Australian albums with eight and nine track sides flood into this country at very inexpensive prices and kill our domestic sales. This is a very big problem and is very demoralizing. Yet, I cannot complain because they do not have the same restrictions in England as they do here, i.e. they can put as many songs on an album as they want to without having to pay high publishing rates. In the US it costs us around .05 cents a song just for publishing. As you can plainly see, this would drive the price of an album of this type up to 20 dollars. So we make do with what we can.

Thanks again for writing and BELIEVE ME I HAVE BING'S FANS BEST INTEREST AT HEART. ONE OF THESE DAYS I WILL BE ABLE TO RELEASE THE ULTIMATE CROSBY PACKAGE. Until then WE CAN ONLY WAIT.

Very truly yours,
STEVE HOFFMAN
Research & Development
Coordinator.

March 21, 1985

Professional answer or not, Steve, the writer does seem to be a Bing-man; and we were presented with an opportunity to put forward some views - which MCA here in Britain, do not seem to want to know. We took the opportunity, so to speak, with alacrity and offered the following to Mr. Hoffman of MCA in California:

Dear Mr. Hoffman:

A copy of your letter to Mr. Richard Pearson of Virginia has been passed to me and needless to say I read it with great interest - and no little surprise.

Firstly, we here are truly appalled at the way in which Bing Crosby is so soon being neglected if not completely ignored considering the vast legacy he left the world - so much of it in MCA hands, too.

We do understand that record companies are commercial enterprises which exist to make money; thus they play a marked part in the serious decline in the popular music field - by continually pandering to the more moronic sections. Understandably possibly, they see the need to work on the 'fast-buck' principle (to use an Americanism) in order to make that money. One wonders, however, if no conscience is occasionally stirred at the vast amount of undiluted rubbish that is poured out - and hailed as 'fantastic' (complete with mega-stars, whatever they are). It is fantastic all right but hardly in the way that would be desirable. However, to return to Bing who is, and as far as I can see, will continue to be for many years, very highly regarded by many sections of the public.

MCA in Britain is totally incomprehensible to us. They answer no letters; we understand the office is barely staffed. Added to that is the confusion as to who owns what - MCA, Decca, MCA/EMI &c. Rights have been the subject of so much change its difficult to know whom to approach. Perhaps thereby lies the reason for the neglect of Mr. Crosby's recordings. Beyond the 'hackneyed' (tho always wonderful) 20 GOLDEN GREATS issues here are nil.

It is all the more exasperating to us that there seems to be no coordination at all, worldwide, of MCA. We are particularly frustrated and angered, for instance, that Japanese MCA are issuing some highly attractive SETS, not only albums, of Bing which contain material that has not been 'done to death'. But, by the time they reach us (on special order mainly) they cost a fortune. MCA in Italy, Germany, and France too, have all issued attractive albums of Bing in the past 4-5 years. Here, virtually nothing. And yet, as Bing himself appreciated, probably his greatest fans were to be found in Britain.

(Cont. over

But MCA, owning as you say, vast varying 'takes' as well as other not-often-issued material, show no interest. Well, that may prove a very mistaken policy. As we understand it, copyright on a lot of Bing's classic work on records has now, or is, expiring. That clearly leaves the field open to all kinds of independent companies. Indeed, there is clear evidence already that they are taking the opportunity to reissue on 'unknown' labels, great Crosby tracks. This has been the case with radio material for years, but now they are turning their attention to Decca/Brunswick/MCA pukka recordings. And we say 'Good luck!' to them if MCA can only cater for the 'punks' of this world.

Your comments re. restriction of tracks on an album in America, English and Australian albums is appreciated and understood - but there cannot be many, if any, English Crosby albums! MCA, MCA/EMI (the latter we believe to be the current MCA licensees) are virtually dead as far as Bing is concerned.

WE ARE CONVINCED (DON'T SAY WE WOULD BE!) THAT ONE DAY A FILM ON TV OR A CHANCE RECORD ON A RADIO PROGRAMME, OR SOMETHING SIMILAR, WILL SPARK AN ENTIRELY NEW SURGE OF CROSBY INTEREST. BING'S TALENTS WERE SO SUPREME WE FEEL CERTAIN THIS MUST HAPPEN.

I must confess we were concerned that you say the Crosby estate is unco-operative. Its difficult to understand what objections or resistance there can be in the way of maintaining Bing's memory and gifts.

Finally, as you invited feed-back, I have gone to considerable lengths to let you know how we feel about matters Crosby in respect of record reissues. We are not so naive as to suggest that Crosby records would sell a million in a fortnight or so as is the case with one or two 'pop' stars and thereby, perhaps, lies the rub. But they would sell, we are certain. And if the circumstances regarding a resurgence as mentioned above materialise, they might well do what they did in the 30's and 40's.

You may like to know that one of our members has actually compiled THE ALTERNATE BING CROSBY, which describes with stop-watch precision the varying 'takes' that have been issued of Bing's records. Another of our publications is BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD, a hardback volume which lists every one of Bing's recordings from the first in 1926 to the last in 1977, both in chronological and then in alphabetical order.

I hope this may be of some assistance to you. If you could at least get some co-ordination between MCA in the various countries mentioned it would be a big step.

With regards,

12 April 1985

REG BRISTO (Hon. Sec.)

Cont. over

It may be that we hammered home our feelings to the extent of over-stating them! To date - 26th May - we have received no reply tho' surely one may be expected.

Some members will recognise that the points they have made were embodied in our letter to MCA in the States.

AND NOW WE CONTINUE "TRACK EVENTS" -

AIN'T THAT THE WAY IT GOES!

- was a song of the early 30's which Bing did NOT, as far as we know, ever sing. But it sums up our current feelings. We started off TRACK EVENTS rather gloomily, fearing that it was largely a case of NON-EVENTS. Then WHAM! out of a clear blue sky (as they say!) things began to happen. Firstly:

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY VOLUME III JZ - 3 £5.95

Yes, No. 3 in this ambitious project (issuing ALL Bing's recordings in date order) made its welcome appearance in mid-May. Any hint of criticism we may have given is certainly invalidated, for its issue was wholly delayed by trouble with the sleeve printers. Volume 3 deals with 1928 with tracks by The Rhythm Boys accompanied only by Harry Barris on piano and tracks with the full Paul Whiteman orchestra.

The reproduction of these historic tracks is of the same breath-taking high quality. Veteran collectors will be well aware of these tracks, and the various 'takes' which are all included here. Bing is very prominent in most of the RHYTHM BOYS' tracks and included, of course, is Bing's dramatic solo performance in HIGH WATER. Titles are:

Side 1	Side 2
*From Monday On - 1	Sunshine -3
*From Monday On - 3	From Monday on - 3
**Mississippi Mud (Frankie Trumbauer & his Orch)	Mississippi Mud -2
Make Believe - 5	-do- -3
Poor Butterfly -2	High Water -3
There ain't no sweet man that's worth the salt of my tears - 2	From Monday on -4
-do- -3	-do- -6

* by THE RHYTHM BOYS ** Frank Trumbauer & his Orch. Remainder with Paul Whiteman & his Orchestra.

To younger, newer, members some of the titles, especially POOR BUTTERFLY, will be mysterious for in this particular number Bing, though present, cannot be heard! But all the tracks have detailed comment in the well-produced sleeve by our member, Colin Pugh of Bristol - which means they are extremely knowledgeable. And there are excellent photographs of Bing and the Rhythm Boys, and a mass of detail about the matrix/take nos of original issues.

These volumes are produced by JOHN McNICHOLAS, JONZO RECORD, PO BOX 212, Harrow, Midd'x HA3 7LD. to whom you should write if unable to obtain the records locally. We emphasise: the quality of reproduction is incredible. And we repeat! You've never heard the Whiteman rhythm section like this !

The great news is that Volumes 1 & 2 have sold exceptionally well, greatly encouraging the producer in his splendid aim of issuing all of Bing's recorded output. Patience will be required by those desperately awaiting the early 30's !

We might conclude by saying that, altogether apart from the truly historic Bing participation, with these albums you get what was generally conceded to be the "greatest band in the land" with Paul Whiteman. These were the days when Bing was seldom named, certainly not on the record labels, but already discerning critics were noting that Bing Crosby of the Rhythm Boys shows great promise - and Johnny Mercer was among them.

Then came:

BING CROSBY: CROSBYANA VOLUME III - "THE WAR YEARS" BROADWAY INTERMISSION BR-129

This, of course, is a Stateside issue and will not readily be obtainable in shops though some of the specialist shops in the larger towns will have it. As you will see from the following, most of the songs will be recognised as familiar Crosby songs - but these are entirely different recordings from the well-known commercial issues. The sleeve-notes (by MARK SCRIMGER) tell of Bing's tremendous war-time efforts, e.g. by his broadcasts themselves, explaining new government regulations &c. because of wartime shortages and the selling of bonds. And, of course, it deals with these recordings, made under the auspices of the War Department's (US) Special Services Division. Oddly, no mention is made of V-discs, tho' undoubtedly these are from that category. The repertoire is as follows:

Side 1:

1. Introduction by Bing/SMALL FRY with Tommy Dorsey & Orch.
2. ONE MORE DREAM (with Charioteers).
3. Community sing: WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES NELLIE/IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME
4. " " LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART/FOR ME AND MY GAL
5. Medley from HERE IS MY HEART with the Charioeers & J. Scott Trotter Orch WITH EVERY BREATH I TAKE/LOVE IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER/JUNE IN JANUARY.
6. YOU CALL EVERYBODY DARLING (with the Charioteers)
7. A toast to Irving Berlin with Al Jolson, John Scott Trotter Orch: ALL BY MYSELF/ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND/EASTER PARADE.

Side 2:

1. Introduction by Bob Buns and Bing, with the Charioteers, John Scott Trotter Orch: DEAR OLD GIRL/THESE FOOLISH THINGS
2. Medley from PENNIES FROM HEAVEN with the Ken Lane singers, the Charioteers, John Scott Trotter Orch. ONE, TWO, BUTTON YOUR SHOE/AND SO DO I (with Eugenie Baird) SKELETON IN THE CLOSET (non-Bing item)
3. Medley Conclusion: PENNIES FROM HEAVEN/I'LL GET BY (with Paul Weston Orch)
4. DOWN BY THE RIVER/ONLY FOREVER/ITS EASY TO REMEMBER (with J.S.T. Orch)
5. THAT SLY OLD GENTLEMAN FROM FEATHERBED LANE (with J.S.T. Orch)
6. PENNIES FROM HEAVEN (with Tommy Dorsey & his Orch)
7. I PROMISE YOU (with J.S.T. Orch).

As we said, recordings of familiar songs entirely different from the ones we're used to - note some of the differing accompaniments, too. And one hears Bing talking as an added bonus.

Sound quality is reasonably good, certainly acceptable, considering the age and origin of the material.

But, alas, here again the record is not easily obtainable. It can, however, be obtained from: BROADWAY INTERMISSION RECORDS, PO BOX 100, Brighton, MICHIGAN, MK48116, USA and the last time we purchased from them the cost was eleven dollars, airmail postage included.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING REALLY SPECIAL : NEXT PAGE !

TRACK EVENTS (cont)

BING WITH GUS ARNHEIM

& HIS COCOANUT GROVE ORCHESTRA !

To the dedicated collector, historian and researcher of the Crosby career, especially the recording aspect, the name of GUS ARNHEIM looms large. There are many reasons: He had a really splendid band, it played at a celebrated nightspot in Los Angeles which catered for the stars of Hollywood when they were in relaxing off-duty periods. It was a band also, as we have told elsewhere, that broadcast a couple of hours nightly in what was more than 'local' radio but more accurately perhaps, regional or statewide radio. Gus Arnheim also had a recording contract - there are eleven 'commercial' issues of the band with Bing supplying the vocals.

> In addition to this, The Rhythm Boys left Paul Whiteman and finished up with a contract at the Cocoanut Grove where Bing, in addition to his stint with Al Rinker and Harry Barris dallied (for want of a better word!) with Arnheim's band, providing vocal refrains, and again,as with the case of Whiteman records, not being named on the record label.

Again, it might be said that Bing was, while with Gus Arnheim, on the springboard for his mighty leap to world fame. Yet another factor was the song I SURRENDER, DEAR, written by Harry Barris and for which Jimmy Grier wrote a really splendid 'concert' arrangement which became a sensational hit, being played night after night at the Grove, and inevitably, recorded by the band, giving Bing a tremendous boost - as he acknowledged in CALL ME LUCKY - he also acknowledged that the 2-hours' nightly radio outlet was a terrific asset which he didn't immediately recognise.

There have been occasional stories of how Bing would nonchalantly astound the patrons at the Grove with an especially remarkable performance, and while Bing did appear on Arnheim gramophone records, the whole Cocoanut Grove era of Bing's career - late 1930 to mid-1931 - has been a tantalising area. What, and how, did he sing on these 2-hour broadcasts? There have been stories of Bing making recordings with Russ Columbo at the Grove....nothing has ever come of it though. We do know that Loyce Whiteman (no relation to Paul) and Donald Novis, another prominent singer on radio at the time, were at the Grove contemporarily with Bing - he duets with Loyce on HO HUM! remember? No tape recorders of course - no Stateside recordings for time differences on East /West coasts.....an era completely lost. It seemed.

The research noted above has produced some startling and fascinating data - for example, that I'VE GOT THE GIRL with DON CLARK and not WISTFUL & BLUE with PAUL WHITEMAN was Bing's very first gramophone recording - that Bing's first solo nationwide broadcast had been preserved; that Bing had recorded odd records with SAM LANIN & HIS PLAYERS, and the IPANA TROUBADOURS (the band that was sponsored by Ipana toothpaste!) - the comprehensive collection of Mack Sennett 'short' film songs, the amazing turn-up of the Bing/Glenn Miller wartime programmes. All remarkable discoveries and surely the discovery that some tracks with Bing singing with Gus Arnheim in air-shots must truly rank with those. For that is what has now come to light! Fifty-five years old - and these have existed all this time - but only just, as far as we are concerned, come to light.

> "Amazing, staggering!" was the reaction of two of the most noted researchers in this country when told - we hurriedly communicated the facts to make sure (a) we were not being naive, and (b) that this was indeed a most remarkable development.

It was at the Rembrandt Hotel on April 27 that member MALCOLM MACFARLANE (Sleaford, Lincs) casuaully remarked that he had heard this album of Gus Arnheim on the radio, with Bing singing - Malcolm also commented that Bing sounded "well away" in one of the numbers, meaning that he had partaken overmuch of the vine, or its equivalent. I pricked up my ears for I felt Malcolm seemed unaware of the import of this. However, he assured me kt was so - and in answer to my urgent request, promised to send me a cassette of the album. It turned out to be:

GUS ARNHEIM & HIS COCOANUT GROVE ORCHESTRA: TAKE TWO RECORDS TT112

In fact, the cassette came from KEN CROSSLAND (Bingham, Notts), with whom we immediately got in touch. He had received the album with two or three others from a Crosby ffiend in the States and, to be honest, Ken didn't seem to be aware of the staggering historic importance of this find.

> We refrained from mentioning above, in the important discoveries made by researchers, the astounding find of KMH material in John Scott Trotter's garage by Eddie Rice. This gave an amazing bounty of songs illustrating the way Bing sang his way thro' the 30's in so many songs he did not put on commercial record. At first, this was for the privilged few but now, happily, reaching a much wider circle of Crosby people through various records and tapes.
>
> The discovery of even just a couple of tracks of Bing singing on the air with Gus Arnheim is, historically, of greater importance even tho' it is little more than fragmentary. We can, as you will perceive, not restrain our excitement at this development.

The record seems to be an authentic broadcast by Gus though consisting of tracks of more than one show. It opens and closes with the Arnheim signature tune, SWEET & LOVELY, and features LOYCE WHITEMAN as theprincipal vocalist. Bing's contribiton consists of just two numbers - the first Is OUT OF NOWHERE. The performance is totally different from his later recording of this song in 1931; the band plays 4 or 5 choruses with Bing singing the second in true 'vocal

refrain' style though he does mutter an aside in the middle! After this the announcer says:

> "BING CROSBY OF THE RHYTHM BOYS PROVIDED THE VOCAL CHORUS IN THE LAST PRESENTATION...."
>
> Surely this remarkable announcement is the earliest extant recording of Bing being so announced on radio?

But is is the second number Bing sings that is so startling for in it he encapsulates - so early - all the things that so stamped him as the complete, stylish, authentic pioneer of a new singing style - the style so soon after this particular performance to sweep him to worldwide fame in a few short weeks

The song is a lovely ballad entitled WHAT IS IT? - good lyric, haunting melody, which the band plays so fine in the style of the period. Then Bing sings the first chorus in splendid, romantic, style:

'What is it, what is it?
That makes me want you -
The way that I do,
What is it? and so on...

When it comes to the second chorus, it is Loyce Whiteman who takes up the singing and after asking "What is it? What is it..? Bing interjects "My money?" "President of the ante-room"(?), "My clothes.. ?" and so on.

In the middle, bridge part, of the lyric Bing takes over again and all the romance is gone for Bing turns it into a hilarious performance! He sings to Loyce:

"You know, gorgeous creature..."

to which she exclaims: "O ! I say..." Bing follows in completely irrepressible style, improving the lyric, causing mirth, thumping the piano and so on to the delight of the dancers (or the band!) though the atmosphere of the ballroom is apparent throughout Bing's two numbers in the way we remember our late-night broadcasts by Ambrose, Roy Fox and others, i.e. you hear the subdued hum of conversation, the tinkle of glasses and china and so on...

Loyce herself remakes the lyric when after asking the same question:

"What is it, what is it? ....

She answers herself: "Must be Jack Oakie!"

Bing comes back with "She's singing to me but thinking of Oakie.... she means Jack Oakie...must be something she ate! Play the piano, she's thinking of Oakie...." and you hear thumping!

Jack Oakie was, of course, a very celebrated and much-loved comedy actor in films who subsequently worked with Bing - and for whom Bing had great admiration.

Bing eventually rejoins Loyce for the finale, but causes another collapse in hilarity by,in aswer to the last "What is it?" he sings:

'MY MANAGER !"

The broadcast is then faded off. How Bing could so nonchalantly fool about in such great style on the air, in addition to singing beautifully, is quite breath-taking.

Actually, as Bing and Loyce are singing the final chorus, you distinctly hear one of the dancers - remember, at the Grove they were nearly all film stars or actors - call out "Everyone, sing the last chorus!"

> We have to say again, there were no tape-recorders in those days - probably early 1931, or possibly late '30 - so one must assume some individuals had highly expensive, private, cutting machines. We could go further and hazard a guess there must be many people living in California who actually remember Bing singing on the air with Gus Arnheim.

Yet, it has taken to 1985 for such an intriguing and stupendous fact to come to our notice!

As a postscript I must confess I am intrigued about the song WHAT IS IT? for other reasons. I kept well acquainted with the hits of the day then but cannot remember that song. It follows I cannot remember any band here playing it; this is surprising for it had all the attributes of a big hit song. One can only regret, ag ain, that Bing never made a pukka commercial recording of it for surely it would have become a favourite Crosby record.

> It is only fair to say that the rest of the album is highly entertaining, with songs like WHISTLING IN THE DARK, ST. LOUIS BLUES, A SURE CURE FOR THE BLUES (in which Bing possibly joins a trio!), SING A LITTLE JINGLE. There is also a song by Donald Novis though the recording disintegrates on this, alas, subsequently recovering. Atmospherics no doubt! Where, or indeed whether, it can still be obtained we are trying to discover; no doubt some means can be found to let the dedicated have it in some form in any case.

We have gone on at some length because we feel the discovery warrants it, and indeed, TRACK EVENTS has just 'growed and growed' to the extent that other planned items have had to be omitted, or shelved, for future issues.

BOTH PAUL WHITEMAN AND GUS ARNHEIM WERE CLEARLY MEN OF DISCERNMENT! IT WAS OBVIOUSLY NO COINCIDENCE THAT BOTH BEGAN TO USE BING MORE AND MORE AS A SOLOIST WHILST THEY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY !

LETTERS

MEMBERS WILL BE INTERESTED TO KNOW we have had our firstenquiry from JAPAN! It reads: "I am pleased to meet you, Bing Crosby Circle. Bing is one of the greatest singers in the world. I suppose I am one of his most fervent fans in Japan. Please let me know of your activities and what you can do. Your kind attention shall be most appreciated - (Nagoya, Japan)." If the writer becomes a member we will introduce him more fully.

Our first letters are preoccupied with songs!

IAN LAWRENCE, 11 Landseer Ave. Northfleet, Kent: I will be 29 on June 6th and I've been a fan of Bing's since I was about 14 although I never joined the Circle until 1977. What I'm leading up to is I heard on the Alan Dell radio show Bing singing a song I'd never heard before and I think its wonderful Bing at his best. The song you will know - HELLO MOM!

Editor: Ah, memories! That, MANDY IS TWO, YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE, LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY, I'LL BE SEEING YOU were, among others, heard almost da on the BBC programmes during the War, often more than once on the various request programmes when Bing records formed three-quarters of all the thousands asked for.

JIM LOVELL, 23 Priory Rd., Acton Green, London W4 5JA: An Irish friend of mine keeps insisting that Bing made a recording with a title possibly THAT'S WHAT IRELAND MEANS TO ME. In the song, the word I-R-E-L-A-N-D is spelled out letter by letter. I cannot trace it in the discography. Have you heard of it?

Editor: No, certainly no commercial recording; don't know th song either, but would certainly hesitate to say adamantly that Bing hadn't sung such a ditty. As we have learned, who knows what he sang on radio at different times?

RAY THOMPSON, 98 Station Lane, Birkenshaw, Bradford, W. Yorks: In the 40's I remember hearing Bing on the radio singing ONE ALONE - very probably a Mailcall forces programme. Has this ever been captured on tape or cassette?

Editor: No, we don't know of it but the anwer above will certainly apply. And this gives me the opportunity to thank those who kindly let me have a taping of Bing singing the Mario Lanza masterpiece, BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE. Most kind - warmly appreciated.

AUDREY COOPER, 30 Broadway East, Carlton, Nottingham: In a recent issue of WOMANS' REALM there was a lovely picture of Bing and Grace in a two-page spread with the caption 'The cool, classic, HIGH SOCIETY 50's look is back'. As one interested in classy clothes the ones worn by Grace Kelly are so lovely it was great to see the film again on TV. And how marvellously Bing sang NOW YOU HAS JAZZ!. It gets better every time I watch and hear. And Cole Porter's biography recently amazed me when I read that 'he didn't care for Crosby's style'.

Editor: Yes, we love women in classy clothes too, but alas, as we stagger round the shopping centre the prevailing fashion still seems to be threadbare, washed-out, sawn-off jeans and T-shirts! And we well remember the first time we saw/heard NOW YOU HAS JAZZ for it was the first time we'd heard a cinema audience burst into spontaneous applause. In fact, it may easily rank as Bing's best screen singing performance. The sheer verve, elegance, style (and singing!) were and are superb. Cole Porter seems to have been a tetchy individual - with some reason perhaps for he led a life of great pain as the result of a riding accident. Additionally, he seemed to resent Bing's seeming avoidance of his songs - remember Bing himself said that Cole Porter, on hearing his 1944 BEGIN THE BEGUINE said: "He left it too late." Or words to that effect.

CHRIS SULLIVAN, 1 Woodside Grange Rd., North Finchley, London, N12 8SJ:

Bing has, of course, been a great inspiration to us since around 1930 - to me, any recording of his when played reaches the parts that other singers cannot reach!

Editor: Like it! Topical, too.

JOHN WEIR, 5 Westminster Avenue, Morecambe, Lancs: Heard the radio programme by Hubert Gregg BOB & BING and he really laid it on thick about Bing's drinking, being held up at the mike when singing in his Whiteman days. He also gave the impression that Dixie died of the result of too much drink because of being on her own a lot. He did play some good records, right enough but it left a nasty taste by attempting to paint Bing as virtually an alcoholic.

Editor: Drink causes a lot of unpleasant things but we haven't heard it said that it causes cancer. We find it quite pathetic how some writers and broadcasters fasten on to any bit of second or third-hand tittle-tattle, hoping no doubt to give the impression that they were "in the know"and to make their efforts sensational - whether they're true or not doesn't seem to matter too much. Pitiful really.

NEIL ROBINSON, 4 Hillcrest Aven., Newton Rd., Burton-on-Trent, DE15 0TZ:

I picked up three copies of the paperback THE FABULOUS LIFE OF BING CROSBY at 40p each in case anyone wants a copy. Up to date, I'm enjoying it very much even though it is written in the American idiom, with several glaring mistakes.

How commercial can some people get? At an antique fair in Stafford I saw a very old golf ball purported to be one of Bing's from the 1940's. I almost asked the dealer how many more had he got under the table!

I met a fella in Nottingham and got chatting about Bing. He said: 'My son is a Bing fanatic and is a member of a Crosby society.' It turned out he was Barry Whittingham's father. We exchanged addresses and phone nos and I'm expecting to see Barry any day now.

Editor: We dealt with the Carpozi book when it appeared - agree very readable, written before Bing's death, a not unusual procedure in the case of famous personalities. If writing to Neil, don't forget 20p or so postage for the book - or so's he can tell you they've gone!

STAN WHITE, 57 Stanley St., Rothwell, Kettering, Northants: Victor Young, second only to John Scott Trotter in Crosby accompaniments under his own name, was also on those American Brunswicks from around 1931 where the accompaniment is credited to a studio orchestra, e.g. I'M PLAYING WITH FIRE, I'M SORRY, DEAR, I'M THROUGH WITH LOVE, I FOUND A MILLION-DOLLAR BABY etc etc. are all with Victor Young. He assembled the studio outfit out of the following musicians:

Saxes & clarinets: Vernon Hayes, Chester Hazlett, Jimmy Dorsey.
Trumpets: Frank Guarente, Mickey Bloom
Trombones: Jack Teagarden, Tommy Dorsey.
Violins: Harry Bluestone, Sylvan Kisner, Walter Edelstein, Harry Hoffman.
Piano: Joe Moresco.
Guitar: Perry Botkin Bass: Arthur Bernstein and drums Larry Gomar.

Victor was born in Central Europe, just where is a mystery. He played violin and appeared with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. He went to America in 1920 and it is doubtful if Victor Young was his real name. Like most immigrants, especially musicians & composers, he would have gone for something more easily pronounced!

Victor was in charge of musical arrangements for the Publix-Paramount Theatres group, all had large orchestras as well as Wurlitzer organs. It was his contacts, in fact, which landed Bing for the 21-week engagement at the Paramount, New York, in 1931 - he knew Bing by then, having taken charge of Brunswick American in 1931 also in the capacity of musical director. In 1934 he moved over to Decca and held the same position. He was senior to Jack Kapp, as a matter of fact, Kapp being on the studio floor, while Victor was 'upstairs'. I again make the point that Young's orchestras were purely for recording purposes and he remained with Decca until well into the 1950's.

Victor also composed: SWEET SUE/OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS/LAWD YOU MADE THE NIGHT TOO LON /STREET OF DREAMS/A HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY(which Teagarden made his own).

The Bing connection is obvious: it was the old gang of musicians from 1931 onwards who kept cropping up throughout the next 20 years or more. You can note also an interchange of musicians between Victor Young, John Scott Trotter, and Bob Crosby's orchestra for recording purposes.

It was as Buddy Cole said: "If Bing liked you, you were in!"

I often wonder if Victor Young was Georgie Stoll!?

Editor: Interesting background on Victor Young from Stan. Victor clearly had a big part in the Crosby story.

We think Georgie Stoll really did exist - but he completely disappeared from the scene.

PRESENTING BING ON THE AIR

Listeners to local radio BBC Northampton, and subsequently, Cambridge, on April 8th last - around Easter - will have been surprised and no little delighted to have heard a programme entitled BING CROSBY SINGS devised and presented by our own member STAN WHITE, of Rothwell, Kettering, a 55-minute airing which proved vastly entertaining.

Having got the go-ahead for such a programme is when, possibly, the heartaches begin! What to include and, just as important, what to omit, presents no little problem, such was Bing's vast output. Bing the Country & Western singer, the Hawaiian, the jazz, the balladeer, the Latin-American, the hymn-singing Bing and so on, especially Bing, the Duettist! An hour presenting Bing for EACH of these categories would still need painful decisions. Hearing Stan's programme and bearing in mind these problems, we think he got it just about right. Stan made use of Bing chatting on the autobiography-set and the personal tapes he had at different times from Bing and Buddy Cole. You will appreciate Stan White is a Crosby-man of some stature.

> He struck up a particular friendship with Buddy Cole for in addition to his Bing interest, Stan is a great organ enthusiast. He possesses an unique tape in which Buddy describes how he set up his theatre organ in his garage (converted into a super sound-recording studio) and indeed, took him on a 'tour' of the organ, presenting the varying sounds and effects he could produce, as well as chatting about Bing and the ways of both arranging for him and accompanying him.

Stan's programme opened with Bing explaining as per the biography set how a radio singer needed a theme song and thus singing BLUE OF THE NIGHT. Then with Al Jolson and ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND. Throughout there was a comfortable mixture of commercial recordings and radio excerpts which gave the programme fine continuity. And his coverage of Bing extended from 1929 (MY KINDA LOVE with the T. Dorsey band) to the 1976 recording of NEVERTHELESS, thus spanning 47 years.

Among the records played were GOING MY WAY, the truly vintage tracks of WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU ('a family affair', remarked Bing, 'with brother Bob's band....'); and the favourite of 1933 (and ever after) THANKS; equally vintage was HERE LIES LOVE from the promotional and not the commercial recording.

Stan used a Bing tape extolling the virtues of Buddy Cole and this was followed by TOMORROW'S MY LUCKY DAY, the 'other' golf song. In addition to Al Jolson, comedy included the hilarious version of LOVE IN BLOOM with Spike Jones & his City Slickers from radio, of course, which had Bing pleading as it finished "John Scott Trotter - don't ever leave me!"

The 'country' side was represented by SIOUX CITY SUE with Bob Haggart's orchestra, always a fine 'stock' record!

What the listener-reaction was we haven't yet heard. But it wouldn't be surprising if Stan received a "More please!" We know other members have, over the years, succeeded in getting their idea of a Bing programme on local radio for though they are "pop" orientated, they are wnnt to slip in programmes of greater merit for the discerning - and older! - listeners. Why not have a go on YOUR local radio? 'Draft' a programme on cassette and submit it as an idea. Its worth a try if you fancy yourself in such a role.

THE CREMO SINGER

Apart from, at least on one occasion, being described as "the little fat chap with the Rhythm Boys" - a wholly irreverent appellation! - Bing's first nationwide epithet was as per the headline above: THE CREMO SINGER. An uninformed listener to a Crosby radio programme once remarked to me: "Fancy an artist of Bing Crosby's stature having to advertise on the radio!" That aspect is dealt with in the article that follows. For now, it is interesting possibly to think that Bing's illustrious voice was employed to promote the sales of cigarettes (Chesterfield), soap (Woodbury), radio sets &c. (Philco), cheese & other dairy products (Kraft), other electrical products (General Electric), soft drinks (Minute Maid) - and cigars. Cigars, infact, made by CREMO ! The promotion of smoking is now heavily frowned upon if not actually banned, of course, in Britain. And even before the highly damaging effect of smoking was finally ascertained, it is known that Mrs. Crosby (Senior) - Bing's mother, highly disapproved of the habit and took Bing to task for his part in promoting it.

SEPTEMBER 2nd 1931 is a date very familiar to the majority of the vast army of Crosby devotees for it was, of course, the momentous occasion of Bing's first solo, coast-to-coast, broadcast which catapuled him to national, if not international, fame overnight. It was the broadcast negotiated by brother Everett who, correctly perceiving Bing's potential, had thrown in his lot as his young brother's manager - something Bing seemed to badly need at the time, it might be added. Everett had contacted with great foresight Mr. William Paley, President of CBS - the Columbia Broadcasting System, which body presented Bing on what was known as a "sustaining programme".

Some digression is needed here for much mail over the past few years, particularly from younger and newer members has indicated not only a lack of knowledge of what a "sustaining programme" was but also some lack of knowledge about the entire broadcasting set-up in America. The comment in the introduction above regarding Bing advertising is a case in point.

THE NEW MEDIUM:

The truth is, of course, that virtually all broadcasting/television in the States was and is on what we call a 'commercial' basis, i.e. most of the programmes are paid for by sponsors - companies advertising their products, on a similar basis to ITV in Britain.

A sustaining broadcast was one NOT sponsored in this way but presented by the station operators themselves. Needless to say this was invariably done in the belief that the artist concerned had the talent and drawing power to quickly attract a sponsor.

It should be remembered that in 1931 broadcasting was considerably less than ten years old - a somewhat staggering thought.

There was nothing in the early years like the BBC in America. True it was the British Broadcasting Company to begin with but quite early it was recognised that such a powerful medium of communication and potential propaganda should be under some sort of governmental surveillance if not control. Not to dictate the programmes nor the propaganda potential but

principally that broadcasting would be conducted on ethical and principled lines. Thus a government charter was granted which gave certain basic rules and guidelines and appointed a Director-General to run the broadcasting authority. Then the British Broadcasting Co., became the British Broadcasting Corporation, with its director-general and his board of governors answerable to a government department.

THIS SHOULD NOT, HOWEVER, BE TAKEN AS IMPLYING THAT BROADCASTING IN THE STATES WAS NOT CONDUCTED ON ETHICAL AND PRINCIPLED LINES. INDEED, THEY HAD STRICT RULES WHICH WERE, HOWEVER, LIABLE TO VARY FROM NOT ONLY STATE TO STATE BUT FROM TOWN TO TOWN!

A MULTITUDE OF STATIONS:

In the USA, invariably referred to as the Mecca of private enterprise businessmen were quick to seize upon the potential of broadcasting in a commercial sense and there quickly arose literally hundreds, if not thousands of broadcasting stations, or transmitters, mostly privately-run in a way that doesn't compare with what we now know as local radio. Practically every TOWN had its own radio station - and it was called radio from the start over there, not 'wireless' as was the case here!

That Britain now has a host of local stations, both BBC and commercial, came about as a result of the revolution in the popular music industry in the 50's and 60's - when the dance band era gave way to the 'group' syndrome with all its accompaniments in the way of skiffle, rock 'n' roll and all the subsequent legacies of soul, punk, heavy metal and so on - whatever they may mean!

So-called 'pirate' stations began operating, playing 'pop' music almost 24 hours a day, mainly from transmitters on ships anchored just outside the 3-mile territorial water limits. Called 'pirates' of course because a license is required here to transmit radio programmes.

Again the government stepped in, enforcing legal requirements, so that the pirates were closed down - one remembers Radio Caroline principally. Also continental stations such as Luxembourg, Fecamp, Normandy, Hilversum and others had beamed broadcasts to Britain.

A great uproar followed the closing down of the pirates, either genuine or engineered, with the result that some concession was deemed necessary - and local radio arrived in Britain. Firstly this was by the BBC then, as commercial TV was being inaugurated at the time, commercial radio stations were legalised in many areas.

Thus, it is possible now to get a direct comparison here on the merits or lack of them of BBC broadcasts and commercially-backed broadcasts. And of course, opinions vary and we are not expressing a view.

AMERICAN COUNTERPARTS:

The closest America got to a BBC were, firstly, the two giants, the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBC). Eventually, because of laws restricting the number of networks a corporation could own, some splitting up occurred and indeed, eventually, a third "giant" appeared, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). There also emerged a "public service" channel which shows programmes without advertisements and operates, as the name implies, totally in the public service.

So, without pretending to be a total authority on American bfoadcasting, the foregoing should be of assistance to those who know radio/TV only from its operations today in Britain - and little or nothing of how it developed in the States.

It is perhaps easier to appreciate now what is meant when Bing is described as not only one of the earliest of radio stars, but its greatest.

As is the case here, artists could perform on local radio and never become known or famous nationally. It follows that an artist presented on coast-to-coast radio (that is, Atlantic to Pacific, right across America), on a sustaining basis, ie.e. without a sponsor paying him OR the station, is confidently expected to obtain

such a sponsor pretty quickly!

BING'S FIRST SPONSOR

All of which returns us once more to the autumn, or 'fall' of 1931 and Bing's first solo, sustaining-broadcast. And as you've already been aware, it was for the Cremo Cigar Company.

From that first airing on 2nd September, Bing broadcast every night of the week except Sundays, while brother Everett was negotiating the sponsorship deal. There was no break in the broadcasts, but from 3rd November (approximately one month after the first programme) Bing became THE CREMO SINGER. Actually, this historic series may have started a day earlier - on the 2nd Nov - for no historian has yet confirmed whether or not the series started then. Certainly it was scheduled to start then but a belief exists that a dispute of some kind prevented it and the start was delayed until the next day.

Unlike all Bing's subsequent series for different sponsors, he was not required to speak, there was no patter or script of any kind except that used by the announcer proclaiming the merit of Cremo Cigars. Bing sang three songs usually with an orchestral item in between songs two and three. The orchestra is of some interest; it was a studio outfit conducted by Carl Fenton and invariably included Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Tommy Dorsey, Jerry Colonna, Lennie Hayton, Artie Shaw and other later-to-be-famous musicians.

The programmes originated from Studio 8 of CBS pilot station WABC in New York City and were, in fact, performed twice each day. One was from 7 to 7.15 for New York time, while ther other, from 11 to 15pm was for the West Coast listening audience. The announcer was one David Ross.

So was launched probably the most momentous career in radio; and one destined to last without any real break for more than 30 years - and even then Bing continued to broadcast almost to the end - as we well know in Britain. And Bing's regular series of sponsored broadcasts, following one after another all through those decades, had nothing to do with the thousands of times his commercial records were broadcast all round the world. Truly the mind might boggle at Bing's mighty radio career.

BUT, NO STRANGER TO THE AIR

It remains to be said that Bing was no stranger to broadcasting before the historic one we have been talking about. As you read in the previous issue of BING, he sang in rather anonymous, unannounced, fashion with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra in the late 20's. More importantly, he had sung as a featured vocalist with Gus Arnheim's Band at the famed Coconut Grove in broadcasts which approximated to the late-night dance music programmes we had here in the late 20's and 30's with Ambrose, Roy Fox, Lew Stone, Harry Roy, the Savoy Orpheans and other outfits. But to reiterate, this brought Bing a certain degree of fame but in more a 'local' sense which couldn't be compared to what followed 2nd Sept. 1931. One might say, in modern parlance, "it was all happening for Bing" in 1931! He had begun regular record-making on his own account and the pace of this quickened considerably.

THE INEVITABLE QUESTION!

The avid collectors will ask: do any of these Cremo broadcasts exist? The answer is almost 100 per cent NO! Although some form of recording was available then, e.g. private cutting machines as used in the record industry, they were very few and far between. The tape recorders, so commonplace today, had not been invented. You will have noted above that Bing performed the programmes twice for East and West coast airings so that no recordings exist in any archives. Mainly, like the Old Gold broadcasts with Paul Whiteman, they have been lost for ever.

Miraculously, however, just a few songs were captured and these are indicated in the listings which follow.

SONGS BY BING-THE CREMO SINGER

As already stated, Bing sang three songs in these 15-minute nightly broadcasts and these are shown in capital letters in the following lists. The items in normal print are the orchestral interpolations. Naturally, Bing sang many songs in these broadcasts that he was currently singing for gramophone records and these are very apparent. Others we may remember but are not likely to hear by Bing now:

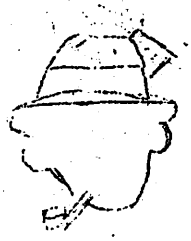
Tues. 3 Nov 1931	JUST ONE MORE CHANCE
	BLUE KENTUCKY MOON
	Hits from 'Bandwagon'
	I DON'T KNOW WHY.
Weds. 4 Nov 1931	TIME ON MY HANDS
	CAN'T YOU SEE?
	Life is just a bowl of cherries.
	YOU DIDN'T KNOW THE MUSIC
Thur. 5 Nov 1931	MY SONG
	SHINE ON HARVEST MOON
	Hits from 'Laugh Parade'
	RIVER, STAY WAY FROM MY DOOR
Fri. 6 Nov 1931	WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS
	AT YOUR COMMAND
	Bend down, sister!
	I'M THRU' WITH LOVE.
Sat. 7 Nov 1931	GUILTY
	KISSABLE BABY
	Its the darndest thing
	I CRIED FOR YOU

NOTE: The three songs of this broadcast are among the fragments that do exist; indeed, they have appeared on an independent-label album, e.g. SPOKANE 1, "Bing Crosby - On the Air"

Mon. 9 Nov 1931	NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE
	THIS IS THE MISSUS
	Hiding in the shadows of the moon
	Goodnight, sweetheart.
Tues.10 Nov.1931	AS TIME GOES BY
	DINAH
	Here comes the bride!
	I SURRENDER, DEAR.
Weds.11 Nov 1931	WHAT PRICE LOVE?
	NOBODY'S SWEETHEART
	Hits from 'The Cat and the Fiddle'
	YOU TRY SOMEBODY ELSE.
THURS 12 Nov 1931	IS THIS THE MUSIC OF LOVE?
	THE LITTLE OLD CHURCH IN THE VALLEY
	Right across the way
	I'M SORRY, DEAR.

FRI. 13 Nov 1931
A FADED SUMMER LOVE
LIFE IS JUST A BOWL OF CHERRIES
I promise you
WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ME?

SAT. 14 Nov 1931
SLEEPY TIME DOWN SOUTH
I'M FOR YOU ONE HUNDRED PER CENT
By the sycamore tree
I KISS YOUR HAND, MADAME



MON. 16 Nov 1931
SWEET AND LOVELY
AN EVENING IN CAROLINE
Love letters in the sand
I APOLOGISE

TUES.17 Nov 1931
MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY
ITS THE DARNDEST THING
You try somebody else
KISS ME GOODNIGHT BUT NOT GOODBYE

WEDS.18 Nov 1931
OLD PLAYMATES
ON MIAMI SHORE
Music in my fingers
STARDUST

THURS 19 Nov 1931
TOO LATE
I'M WITH YOU
Tonight or never
YOU'RE MY EVERYTHING

FRI. 20 Nov 1931
WITH A SONG IN MY HEART
BELIEVE ME
I can't write the words
WHEN THE REST OF THE CROWD GOES HOME

SAT.21 Nov 1931
WITHOUT A SONG
SOME OF THESE DAYS
The cutest kid in town
WITH LOVE IN MY HEART

MON. 23 Nov 1931
MY SONG
LUCILLE
Hits from 'Connecticut Yankee'
CAN'T WE BE FRIENDS?

TUES.24 Nov 1931
BEAUTIFUL LOVE
WHAT IS IT?
Save the last dance for me
CALL ME DARLING

WEDS.25 Nov 1931
WHAT DID YOU DO WITH IT?
AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'
This is my love song
BLUE KENTUCKY MOON

THURS 26 Nov 1931
I'M THANKFUL
OH! MISS HANNAH
My paradise
HOME

FRI.27 Nov. 1931
A FADED SUMMER LOVE
YOU TOOK ADVANTAGE OF ME
Hits from 'The Music Box Revues'
GOODNIGHT, SWEETHEART.

(To be continued)